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HERVEY WHITE

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When Eve Was Not Created
And Other Stories

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WHEN EVE WAS NOT CREATED

And Other Stories

BY

HERVEY WHITE

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1901

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
When Eve Was Not Created	3
The Man and the Lake	91
A Monochrome	119
The History of a Paradox	173

When Eve Was Not Created

When Eve Was Not Created

I

ON the edge of the far North Sea, just where the last point of the gleaming white cliff dips down into the treacherous water, there rests on a narrow shelf of sand, in a niche formed by rock and sea, a tiny fisher village, that is the beginning of my story.

To think how it ever came there at all is but to make another observation on the marvellous persistence of man's nature. To comprehend, when fertile plains are yet unbroken, how it is that folk will live there; to watch how they will drive picks into the rock behind in order that they may mine out another inch of doorstep, so that some time in a rage the black water may not quite suck them under; to explain all these things with satisfaction is to solve many questions of the universe and throw open the shut gates of science.

Yet there the village is, and there it has been for centuries. The waters are trusting and gen-

clutching close at his heart, he does not utter a sound but stares out in the face of the water.

This boy has a father and mother; also brothers and sisters. He has many playmates, too, and is beloved by all in the village. Still, he is never at rest. Already he feels something lacking. "I want some one to love, all for my own," he used to say reverently to himself when he had crept up on a ledge of the rock and was looking out over the sea. "I want some one who will be mine all my life and to whom I can tell all of my thinking." Then, when he would go back to his playmates again, and they flocked around him shouting, and when the women stopped to caress him as they passed, and the men called out gruffly from their boats, then he was more than ever alone, more than with the sea out before him. But he would laugh and shout with the rest. He would run and plan all the games, till they said he was the happiest boy in the village, and strangely enough this was really true.

His yearning must fasten on something. There was a little girl who played with them. Her name was Helma Sorensen. She, too, had the eyes of the North, and long braids of flaxen hair. Her face did not tan like the

others, perhaps because she did not play out. She was always afraid of the sea and sat with her dolls in the house.

The boy came to love this girl, and he tried to get her to play with the ocean. "See, Helma, I run right in here wherever the white sand shows through. Come, hold fast on to my hand, we will run down always together."

But Helma shrank back, still afraid, though she was pleased at the boldness of her hero.

The boy grew more and more to love little Helma. He thought of her, whatever he was doing. In some fantastic fashion he would twist the whole motive of his work till he made it tend toward her pleasure.

His father, perhaps, set him to mending the nets. "Now my Queen has set me a task," he would say to himself at his working.. "She watches over me now, standing by much pleased if I am skilful. If I become slothful or get impatient and break the threads, she will not look her reproof, but in her heart she will feel a great sorrow."

As he grew older he was sometimes taken out in the boat and bidden to do some small helping. Then he would think of Helma as being with him and much affright at the depth

of the water. Perhaps she would become dizzy and fall in, and then he would leap in and rescue her, swimming far off to the shore and soothing her, even when he was hopeless.

Once when they were playing on the beach a child did get into deep water, and he boldly plunged in without thought, and saved it at the risk of his life. The women praised him greatly for this, and his heart was big with thinking that Helma should hear. He was too modest to speak of it himself, and never when he saw her did she mention it. Perhaps her admiration was beyond her words, and he loved her still more for her silence. After many months he ventured with much fear to praise her for it. He learned then that she had heard of the incident, but that she had forgotten it at once. It had never occurred to her since. Perhaps this was the greatest disappointment of his young life. He grieved about it for days and lived quite alone in the cliff. But gradually he became reconciled to it. From day to day he caught glimpses of the flaxen braids and stole a glance into the innocent blue eyes.

"Of course she could not be thinking of my petty deeds," he said. "She has queenly thoughts to concern her."

For two years the boy lived on, loving the blue-eyed Helma. His devotion was generally known in the village, though no one now spoke of it to him. They had learned from speaking at first that the blood would rush up to his face and the tears would brim in his eyes. No one was used to his tears, so they never would let any one tease him. When a stranger came to the village and began the remarking of this, they would always carefully explain how Svend was sensitive about Helma and you must not speak of the subject or pretend that there was anything unusual in his passion. As for the other boys who had always been his playmates, they did not speak of these things nor did they pay attentions to Helma. They had respect for the young Viking's fists.

One day when the two were alone for a moment she complained of this jealousy in her peevish child way, and said she hated him. He had been all on fire with his passion, although he had not so much as touched her hand when he had given her some playthings. Still, she may have felt his strength, though suppressed; the love sense is ever most sensitive. She would not often play with him alone.

Well, after she had cried out with irritation, the boy said never a word but played on as if nothing had happened. In all the weeks afterward he made no show that he was affected, but gradually it became known in the village that Svend had passed over his devotion. Toward Helma he was the same as toward the rest. He was no doubt growing out of his childishness.

Helma herself felt bitterly aggrieved at this, and began to show him marked preference and attention. He was always kind to her—more kind than ever before; but the wonder from his eyes had departed. He smiled with the sadness that is knowledge.

One more year passed, and Svend was twelve years old. He must go off to work, said the mother; we have now too many at home.

A place was found with an uncle who lived back in the hills. He was to become a carrier's errand boy and to help in changing the horses.

All the world seemed opened up to him. He should see, now, all that he had dreamed of. He did not eat, he did not sleep. He hardly heard the farewells of the people of the village. Once, as he was going away his eyes fell on the

II

THE new life among the hills was filled with new growth and affections. There were, first, the horses to love as they came in to him from the stations, up the brown road one day and back the next, always expecting their food in the mangers. It was Svend's duty to see that the food was ready and that the shaggy beasts were well cleaned and bedded. On the alternate nights there returned to him the same horses. There were two sets, one for each way on the road. The boy thought only of them by their names, it was quite as if they were his playmates; or, better still, they were his children; and his were the joys of a father. He was the keeper and possessor. If he was neglectful they would suffer for their comforts. Always before going to bed he used to slip into the stable in the night to tell them that they need not feel lonely. He never could find them asleep, and immediately when he entered the door they would stop munching their hay and wait for him to come up and touch them. He would rub their noses softly with his palm, or

pat the smooth curve of their necks. Sometimes if he was feeling very lonely, or if he had been impatient with them in the evening because they were too eager to be eating, he would be filled with love or repentance, and he would put his young arms around their heads and press his own face to theirs for forgiveness.

At the carrier's house where the boy lived there were no children, but staying with the carrier's wife was a younger sister, a maid of some seventeen years. Thorka had an old, sweetly-serious face and took an interest in the daring young Viking. Her hair was combed smoothly back in plain bands. She had quiet ways and firm, soft, gentle fingers. Thorka was interested in birds and in flowers, and showed many things to the boy's dawning wonder. Among other things she showed him new love.

Already far back in the sea and cliff village little Svend had given signs of his bent. He drew pictures easily and joyously, making all of the good folk to marvel. He had drawn animals first, and birds, all of those known in the ark; and then he had made boats and ships, and finally the most wonderful landscapes—such places as no one had ever seen. Even the

crabbed schoolmaster who cared only for ciphering and reading, and who was never easy from worrying over new pranks, was proud to speak praise for the boy. "Some day he will be a great man," they had learned to say, nodding their heads.

And now with the influence of the new love for Thorka this power was widening out. He was learning to shadow out the human face, the mysteries of its speech and emotions. Always he was trying to do this so that he could picture one face,—Thorka's; but never could he do that half beautiful enough, but Helma's he remembered easily. The blue eyes, the flaxen braids, no matter if the eyes had something of soullessness in their staring. He understood all in those eyes, but try as he would over again, he could not catch Thorka's expression.

And the girl helped him in many little ways. She had a box of colours that she used for her drawings of the flowers, and these she shared with her playmate. She taught him, too, the simple rules she had learned at her school, all of which he understood, where she but remembered the wording.

Then travelers came along the brown road,

and artists got him to sit for them while they sketched, and they showed him how to lay on the color, praising his work till he walked in the air for days after. Always they said he was beautiful, and always they wanted him to sit for them. This seemed so strange to him when he thought there was only Thorka to see. They never spoke to him of Thorka's beauty. Only once did he mention it to one, and his answer was a word, half a sneer, a strange sounding foreign word that the boy could not understand. But still his own love never questioned. He worshipped when the girl never knew, and always alone he was trying to paint her, and beating his hand till it was bruised with beating, because it would not succeed.

Then she went away to the town. "It is necessary to return to the school," was all the explanation that she gave. How could she know that it was breaking his heart, and she even seemed glad to be going.

Each night for many months afterward, Svend used to go out and talk to his horses. He used to paint them as well, and he could put the pity in their eyes. Then the traveling artists praised him for this, and showed him new wonders still more; and they left with him odd

bits of canvas and half tubes of color, and brushes.

Always he was yearning for her face, looking till the strain came into his eyes; the haunted look that is of the North, and is seen in every Viking face. It may be but a shadow down across the cheek, it may be but a line of the jaw, but always in the Scandinavian it is there, a yearning that clutches the soul in the blue eyes.

Sometimes his tired memory would catch the face unawares, and then his heart would beat more sturdily for days, until he sickened with longing, because he had not seen it again. He tried to dream the face in the night, but there was a clogging dull haze in his dreams. To him the most dreary fate in the world was a future when he should entirely forget, when he could never call the face back. But he lived on with his painting and his work and all said that he was the most joyous boy in the world.

He was well in his third year at the station, now being near the age of fifteen, when Thorka suddenly returned. They had received no word to expect her, the boy came in from his horses in the evening and there she was sitting by the window; he felt so awkward and big.

"Why, how you have grown!" said Thorka immediately on greeting him. From time to time throughout the evening he looked at her and tried to see wherein she had changed, for at the first he said that she was not the same. He could not decide, as he looked, how the change had quite come about. She was as placid and sweet as before. There were the same gentle ways with the hands, but where was the soul he had known?

Gradually, as he came to see her for days, it came that the change was in him: that the soul had been a creation of his own. Thorka had even improved in the years; it was he who had left her behind.

This did not appear from without. For she was the well-matured woman and he was the lank, restless boy. Thorka felt it, however, and instinctively venerated his presence, though she assumed the familiarity of the elder. Svend knew it all very well, though outwardly he shrank, timid and ashamed. Then the woman began to love the bashful youth, to love him for the man he was to be and this was most painful of all, for the boy's love had vanished away.

She used to come to him in gentle, elder-sisterly fashion and ask to look with him at his pictures, and then as if forgetting herself in her interest she would lay her soft hand on his neck. He shrank from her touch as if it had been something poisonous. He felt that she was not quite sisterly, that her interest did not make her forget. Once when the twilight was soft and they had been for some time together, she impulsively drew his face up against her breast; his shame burned at the remembrance for days.

Then the outside world came calling him. Before this time a railroad had been creeping up into this province and now the first engine had arrived. There was no more need of the horses. They were sold to some far away city, and the boy must seek out new work. Naturally the railroad pointed the way. He must ride in the richly furnished coach that was dragged along the track like the wind. At the end, too, was the oft-dreamed-of city—the place that the artists had said was so ugly, but to which they had always returned.

"Good-by, Thorka," he said, half putting out his hand. She seized the hand in both her

own and kissed it there before them all. Her breast was shaking with sobs. The tears were flowing from her eyes.

As he seated himself in the magnificent coach among strange people he had never seen, as the familiar landscape began to run backwards past the window and only far away remained steady, he, too, felt soft tears in his eyes. But whether they were for Thorka or for himself, he was not experienced to tell.

III

THE city was very big and very lonely in spite of all it had to tell. The boy was not long in finding work. His uncle had helped him here, again, and soon he was spending regular hours, entering a huge gloomy cavern at seven o'clock in the morning to be let out again at six in the night, all day to work and sweat in the roar and heat of new iron as it was being rolled out in the mills. But he was a strong youth, and did not mind this, once he had accustomed himself to it. There were brief times for resting and chat. The men seemed to him very good comrades. There was ever a kind word for him, the favorite wherever he went; for he was quick to run on an errand or to help some slow worker when his own task was done, his voice was well tuned for a song, his legs not too tired for a dance as they sat in the noon hour at dinner. The men were well pleased to be near him. "One of God's favored," they said, "and happy wherever you put him."

Oddly enough, he sought out a lonely place

to live, for all his fondness for comrades—a tiny, low-browed attic, with a window opening out on the roofs. There he came home at night and prepared his own evening meal, and ate it with his lamp and his books.

As a boy, even back in the village of the cliff, he had been passionately fond of reading. Many a night his mother had arisen and driven him off to bed, only to awaken again and find that he had relighted the candle and was lost once more in the page. It had been tales, then, that most took him, quaint old mysteries of the North, half religion and half romance. He had loved the adventurous ones, too, of the Vikings, and the brigands who lived in the South.

Later on, at the carrier's station, he had grown to read history more, and always there were books left by the travelers who passed through and loved him, and longed to give him proof of their love.

But now his taste was changing again. He was entering the first gates of manhood. Tales of love he wanted now, though he was ashamed to confess it to the men. He told them of the books he had read; not a word of his reading at present. He bought these books

at the stalls, with the privilege of exchanging them again. He carried them up to his attic room and pored over them as he ate, or set them up before him later as he worked, washing dishes and following his story, or carrying it through the mending of his clothes. Love! love! beautiful women, and strong, daring heroes; the romance of the first meeting together, and the intricacies of difficulty before the wedding; one after another he read of these; hundreds he could count them in all, never complaining that they were always the same, often going back to the fond declaration and repeating it till he knew it by heart and could say it to himself as he worked.

He did not take these stories deeply to himself at the time, though he always imagined himself as the hero. Or, perhaps, he took them so deeply that he did not need love in reality. However it may have been, he cared very little for the companionship of women at this time. He looked upon them all with something of reverence and shyness, but beyond a few words in passing he knew only the heroines of the books.

His painting, however, he did not once forget. There were new materials in the city, and

Sundays were good days for work. At times he could sell a small picture to encourage his interest still more.

One year, two years, three years, he remained in the wide, gloomy cavern, working with his comrades, the men, hoarding his small earnings to send home. Now he was full eighteen years old, earning the wage of a man, but in every way a boy for all that; a grown body with inexperienced soul, and yet there was a longing for experience, the restlessness that books were failing to charm away. During the last year he became much in the habit of laying aside the love story, and putting out the small light, he would creep softly out of his window, and lie on the slow-sloping roof, looking up and dreaming with the stars. Which one was his? he often asked himself. Which one held his fate in its wheeling, and watched him as it traversed the sky? It should become known to him when he met with the woman who was his mate, something seemed to whisper him answer. "Her character will point out your star; until then you shall be unable to tell."

He liked the faint glowing band of the milky way and wondered and wondered at its richness, if this could be the maturity of love.

Then gradually he became accustomed to let his mind dwell on a black, starless spot right in the thickest of the nebulous path, high up in the point of the zenith. His eyes strained to catch his star there. What glory if it should one day appear to him and light up the blackness surrounding. Gradually this came to be his fate—the hope that a star would appear.

The last months he gave up his books and wandered in the streets, as if searching. He looked at the women who were passing, confused if they turned at his glance, though they did not seem displeased at his staring, and were often on the point of asking if they could help him, there was something so like hunger in his eyes. But always he turned away. He saw that the face was something lacking.

He went to the theatres and concerts. He had a native loving for music. Women came and played before him there, displaying all types of beauty. He used to think at times that he had found the one chosen at last, and for night after night he would go to the performance and coming home would look for his star. In the end there was something at fault. Then he could never more than look at these women; he was far too humble to speak to them.

One day he met a lady in the street. It was Sunday. She was going to church. She was dressed all in black; he guessed she was mourning for some one. Just at the moment he was passing she chanced to let her prayer book fall. He stooped quickly to pick it up, and in returning it to her his coarse fingers brushed on her glove. Ah, how the fire shot through him! He looked up and her eyes were gazing into his, blue eyes with tremulous lids; he was sure it was the tears that he saw there, and the lady was, O, so young. "Thank you," was all that she said, and he could not have spoken for his life.

That week he was restless from the first, his restlessness increasing as the days passed. He was wondering if she would go again to church. Promptly at the time he was waiting. He had gone an hour early for fear he should miss her. Sure enough she came walking by, but this time she did not drop her prayer book, she did not even so much as see him.

From week to week he was only waiting till Sunday should come about so that he could meet her on the street. He was bold enough to follow her once when she came out from the church, and he saw her go into a large

stone house. She must be a lady of noble birth.

From that day the stone house became the center of his universe. He never forgot its direction. "Now, I'm going from it," he would say in the cavern as he worked, and his heart seemed to yearn back toward it. "Now, I am returning," he would change, and the heart was singing and happy. At night, when the work was ended and his simple meal was over, he would dress himself in the neatest he could afford and walk out to look at his house. There was a little light often burning in one of the highest windows; this, he concluded, must be hers; and he always prayed to that light, and said he had found out his star. He came to love the stone house like a friend; it seemed to understand all his trouble.

One Sunday morning he felt that something would happen. The feeling had been growing all the week. Perhaps she would drop her prayer book again; if so, he would be emboldened to speak to her. He had come down nearer the house this time. He could not wait at the usual corner. Surely his fate would be decided.

Promptly at the time the door opened and

the beloved figure came out. A little dog came with her, though she had told it at the door to go back. The dog, too, must follow her in spite of her commands. She had proceeded some way, when the tiny fellow, longing for recognition and forgiveness, ran and lay at her feet. She had not seen him and so tripped and half fell, catching her foot in the lace of her dress and sadly tearing the flounce. When she saw what was done she cried out against the dog, and calling the trembling beast to her quite kindly—it was panting with the love it knew for her—she beat it fiercely with her hand, using the sharp corner of the prayer book. Then she ran back to the house leaving the dog there quivering with sorrow.

The boy watching went across the street to speak to it, but it would not give him any notice. It had received no physical injury. The pain from the beating must have been slight, but it lay there moaning like a child. He could not comfort it or make it see him.

Svend walked away from the stone house and never returned to it again. But his comrades did not find him less merry.

One day he said farewell to them all, for he had purchased a passage to America.

IV

TO arrive in a strange land, and to hear on all sides a strange language; to make a place for one's self in the organized industry where workers are already idle—it is the story of thousands to-day. Svend was but one of the thousands.

Then his great personal charm gave him advantage. Who could resist the stalwartness of the great blonde athlete? Who would not bestir himself to work for the blue, pleading eyes and the stumbling of the dumb foreign mouth!

At first he did not fall into good hands. A farmer took him up, from the supply offered by an employment bureau, and worked him exactly as he would work a beast that would not cost him trouble at dying. Svend was eager to learn. He toiled from first dawn till late twilight. In the end he was quite broken down, and lay on his bed with a fever.

There were some kind neighbors who had become interested in him, and at this point took him into their own house. They were much

given to thoughts of religion, and spoke and acted chiefly with regard to the world after death. They could not leave this young man to die because they knew that he was not converted.

A daughter, Ruth, a girl of about his own age, became his chief nurse and care taker. Often in the delirium of his fever, when he would waken for a moment to reality, he would see her praying by his bedside, her white hands pleadingly uplifted, her lips repeating petitions. She seemed to be more angel than woman. Then the fever had him whirling again.

The crisis of the disease was passed over, and faintly he awakened to life. He was now like a new born babe. All sensations must be learned anew. Naturally, as he grew up a man, all his experiences had but one center, that was the unselfish girl who sat patiently sewing at his bedside.

He used to lie watching her movements, waiting for some new perfection. If she spoke he marveled at her voice and wondered if Heaven knew such music. If she moved he was in raptures at that. To him it was the poetry of motion.

She used to read to him always from the

Bible and explain to him the strange places in a language that he was fast learning to comprehend. It seemed so easy to him to remember all of her words. He told them over to himself when he was left to be sleeping.

He would remember, too, how she had looked as she spoke them. Very beautiful she was to him; to all she must have been pleasing.

Her face was long and slim, and filled with religious devotion. Her smooth, light hair was combed down the high sides of her brow. A saint's brow could not have been purer. Her eyes were large and limpid with spiritual beauty; her mouth was thin-lipped and controlled; her chin firm set and well pointed. Next to the saintly face the young man worshipped her hands. As he grew into more lusty health, but as yet was unable to go about the house, he used to sit watching her hands devising how they might be brought to touch him. Perhaps he asked her to give him something, a new pen or tiny piece of colour. He always chose something small, so that contact of fingers would be necessary. Her fingers were so firm and cool, such long, graceful, delicate fingers. He would sit with her mother for hours, his lips fairly parching with fever and say he was not thirsty

at all, so that when Ruth came he could ask her for water. Sometimes his collar was choking, or he needed cool water on his forehead, but always the fingers were shy at these demands, there was a certain coquettishness in the fingers. And yet he was sure at times that Ruth felt something of love beyond her sympathy for his helplessness. Most of all she was interested for the welfare of his soul. She had never met with such obduracy. She read to him tirelessly from the Book, but he seemed to be listening to the reader and not to the meaning of the words.

Svend did try to believe. After he had gone out from their house and was at work again for the farmer, he would come and spend Sunday with his friends, and together they would try to convert him. It was terribly in earnest with them, they had rescued him on the brink of the grave in order to win his soul over to Heaven, and now that the body was saved the soul was still hanging over perdition.

They used always to take him to their church and watch him eagerly as the preacher spoke the truths that they thought must convert even the deaf, so clearly they rang in their hearing.

In the evening they would invite in some of the elders of the church, and together they would work for this lost one. They all loved him now as their son; much more that he must be won for Heaven. And the young man tried. At his work he pondered over the faith; he argued and prayed in the night time. It seemed so beautiful to believe, so rational and peaceful and helpful. Besides with belief there was Ruth, the saintly sweet wife waiting for him. She had never spoken of this, but he felt it was so from her often. He struggled and prayed to believe, but belief would not quite come to him.

One evening after they had been making extra effort all day, it seemed he was at last to be chosen. Several of the elders had returned with them from church and even Ruth had joined in the argument. Before, she had only read to him from books; she could not bring herself to the intimacy of personal talk. But to-day there had been a short time alone, and the white hands were trembling, and the tears sounded in her beautiful voice.

That evening they were praying around him, kneeling and beseeching the Lord. He felt the power of their faith; almost he was now in the

faith. He lifted up his eyes as if to look for the light of grace that seemed to be falling upon him. A kerosene lamp lighted the room and as he looked its rays instead of falling on him seemed to concentrate on the shining bald pate of the oldest deacon who was praying. Back and forth, up and down, bobbed the shining, luminous poll of the deacon. The boy was a boy in an instant. He laughed outright in his nervous excitement, and the spell of the circle was broken.

He knew how he was wounding their feelings. He knew they loved him more than any one in the world, and yet he could not control himself. He laughed out loud and long in spite of the astonished grief in Ruth's face. No doubt she thought him possessed of the Devil. She was never quite the same towards him afterwards.

And his feeling toward her changed, as well. He saw that she was not the consummate woman. He wanted to be loved for himself, for his manhood, his strength and imprisoned genius. She could see only his soul, the fervour with which he praised his Creator. This was well that a wife should see. No one had ever

seen it before in him, though he had been conscious of it always. But besides this he possessed many other feelings as well. He had an intellect, a love for the beautiful; he had all the passions as well, and the human intricacies that develop from them. These Ruth could not even partially know, she was narrowed and confined by her religion.

It was very sad to him, wandering in the field at night, learning that he was alone, where once he had thought himself mated. The moon shone upon him healingly. There was a sweetness and balm in its companionship that he had never quite tasted before. He learned to love the soft moonlight so that he lived in it more than in sunshine. In daylight he saw only in memory, and his festivals were the nights of full moon. There were wide pastures with gently waving slopes, and dark trees standing upon them to catch the mysterious shadows. Sheep and horses walked among them at times, feeding peacefully in the dimness. Then up would rise the silvery round moon and bathe them in her flood of white ether. Their backs caught the pale, lustrous light. They were created creatures of Heaven.

The boy walked in ecstasy then, forgetting that he had been weary with labour. Now Ruth the saint wife, was forgotten. He must find him a mate to walk here and feel with him in this pasture the holiness of faint, falling light.

V

THE youth came quickly to recognition. There are a few spirits that will not stay down. Artists saw that he could paint, men with influence came to hear of it, so he was established in the city, working out his training as an artist; easily earning enough for his bread. There were companions too, bright girls and gay youths in the Academy. Svend was a favorite with them; always the one that they turned to.

There was enthusiasm of organizing new clubs, art talk and reading together, reckless mirth of the large sketching parties and all of them working like insects.

In this new company was one girl, Alice, with clear eyes, who soon stood alone among the others. She seemed to understand all things, even before the young man had spoken. Her brown hair was rippling like blown water, and her figure was dainty and light. Alice painted as well as, painted much better than, her companion. She could express all she felt; he was groping far beyond his powers.

They used to go out sketching together and were as confidential as brother and sister—more than these usually are. There were long walks in wide country meadows, with reading of the poets and discussion, with guesses at the meaning of life and narrations of past experience as argument. There were excursions to all parts of the city in search of the picturesque; walks in the marketing place; exclamations at bright bits of colour; again in the confusion of commerce, where the great horses drew heavy wagons and drivers sat like the bronze of old masters. The wharves, too, were familiar places, and they were on intimate terms with the old woman who picked the rags and bits of wool there and sold them again to the dealer.

The girl knew the likings of the poor always, and could adapt herself to their ways. They need only look into her eyes, and see the sweet trembling mouth to share with her all of their troubles. Partly because the poor are more picturesque, and partly because they loved them for their poverty, the two companions used often to go into the most miserable quarter of the city, so much so that many came to look for their coming and felt sad when they did not appear.

The young man used to live in open admiration of the winning ways in which this beautiful patrician, Alice, would go into the lowest of these hovels. She was always as one of them from the first, though in every way she was different. She thought their thoughts, suffered their cares, and was even poor in their poverty. She sang some simple old ditty to the grandmother, told wonderful stories to the children and talked to the men about work and the unusual tightness of the times. Meanwhile, Svend sat in the background admiring along with the rest. He was looked upon by them all as the lucky young man she would marry. They often joked her about that, and she took it without confusion or blushing, looking into his eyes and laughing merrily, though he had never spoken of love.

He used to wonder often, when he was alone, whether he really did love her. Certainly the day was long that he did not see her; certainly he was restless and peevish.

It was strange how he could talk to her about anything without the slightest concealment or hesitation; of the lower life of the city on which men are usually silent to women of their own class; on general questions of men and women

—questions of sex and of marriage. Here he learned the woman's point of view, the fixed virtues that in man are but prejudice.

"Did he love the clear-eyed Alice?" Svend asked himself again and again. Did she love him in return? Of this he felt a little more certain. With a woman the tenderness lies nearer the surface and more easily looks out the eyes.

One night of the full moon, they were coming home through an avenue of dark trees, the flecking of the changing light and shadow was bewitching the ripple of her hair. Yes, he surely now loved her. She was dressed in a simple white gown, with blue ribbons fluttering at her waist. The fine white folds fell floating. She was never more pure and more sweet. There was a faint, melting softness in her eyes that could not be wholly the moonlight; her red lips were tremulous and tempting. There was nothing a man should do but kiss them.

Suddenly a carriage dashed by, the horses uncontrolled by a driver. Later on came the police in hot chase, and the two watched and listened to see if they could get news of the capture.

The excitement of the incident, the specula-

tion as to whether any one was in the lurching carriage, the appreciation of the artistic beauty of the horsemen as they rode along unconscious of watchers, all these things caused them to forget love, and drove sentiment out of their heads.

Next day it all came back to Svend, the beauty and witchery of the moonlight. He was relieved, however, to think that the kiss had not been taken, not but that it would have been delightful, but it seemed best to go on in purity, to let the friendship end without marring.

For the friendship must end; at least it must be interrupted. Young ambition could not be satisfied in America. Svend must finish his training in Paris.

There were gay farewells at the wharf, for a crowd had come to see his departure. Handshakes and good wishes everywhere; promises to meet in the future. As the boat turned slowly away the hats and handkerchiefs were waving, one white spot seen alone among the rest, faintly and tremulously waving. The tears were flowing from Svend's eyes, his throat was contracted with sobs.

VI

PARIS, that perennial exposition! The intoxication of the free Latin quarter, where the primitive and the end of the century are so curiously mingled in harmony; a life among fighting men, where each one must rank by his muscle; the quarreling and the jealousy of free lovers; the mirth and raillery over the defeated. Friendships here, too, as friendships all over the earth. Fencing and wrestling and songs. Beautiful women standing naked. Then the reckless abandon of the nights, the gaiety of music and dancing: women, everywhere women, who live that men may have pleasure. Suppers where wine is like water to wild animals, and with all this the seriousness of youth, the earnest soul struggling toward the ideal, long walks alone in the night, and hearts aching up to the stars.

Svend was here a leader as before. Long and gaunt he was with the tragedy half concealed in merry eyes. He had muscles like finest spun steel and skill that comes from natural training. He could strike any two men

down in a moment and half languidly challenge a third. He was the champion wrestler of the school, and no one had seen him put down; fencing he took up in earnest, till his master must plead of fatigue. Then he walked out on the street. People could dress here as they chose. Who could choose so daringly as he? A white wool, heavy-knit jersey with bagging corduroy trousers and elegant, laced half-boots. Everyhere he wore his crimson painter's cap, his stiff white hair showing under. When it was cold he affected a cloak, long and in the manner of a brigand. Always he whistled as he walked. "Touch me if you dare," was in his shoulders, and yet there was never a jollier fellow.

He lived alone in a curious little shed which he called his studio. His friends came to see him when asked. At times when they came unasked they could get no response from within, but departed with a vague haunted feeling that the tenant might after all be there listening. All agreed he was a curious youth, and all vied in claiming his affection.

The women, more than the men, chose this one as their comrade. He seemed to understand them so well, and to feel no shock at their

weaknesses. He was always ready for their revels, and yet stopped short at one point:—he would never make love like other men. When they urged him he said quietly, "I am waiting." They soon had a romance worked out of how he was in love with some great lady, some lady it was impossible to wed, and he would always remain true to her. By degrees this story came to be a part of his character. No one was introduced to him but it was whispered. Some were bold enough to speak openly to him or even to plead for his confidence. To these there was always the old answer, the same tragedy of smile in his eyes: "I am waiting, dear child, waiting. Shall we meet at the dance about midnight? I shall claim the first turn as your partner."

In the summer months he went away toward the sea, and lived and painted quite alone. Already it was known he had genius. Artists always can recognize that.

There were wide, flat marshes by the sea, and behind them long lines of shallow hills; here he used to wander with the moon, his old love who was with him again. His passion now was to paint only with her. He would show the richness of his love, the wonders

brought forth by her light. He would take the commonest object, a pig-sty, a flat dusty road, and throwing over it the light of his moon it would seem the way leading to heaven. Only to him the picture was never half beautiful enough, because of the limits of his power. He did not sleep longer in the nights of the moon, or if so he slept in the open and dreamed that he saw. Never would his paint be diaphanous enough. He cursed and cried out at its thickness.

Those nights of struggling to remember, those days of struggling to reproduce, left him like one recovered from a fever. He would sleep till the moon came again.

This spiritual longing was having physical effect upon him. Or was it the physical that created the spiritual? Or did the two merely go in hand, and together? At all events he came to physical pain, a hunger for the apples of Eden. His lips felt the appetite first. He had firm lips and well fulled for kissing. He came to finding himself ready in expectation; to realize that they were aching for pressure. He used to beat and pound them with his fist till they were cut and bleeding against his teeth; but this did not bring them relief, they

were quivering and yearning as much as ever.

The pain was now, too, in his breast and his arms ached for something to be clasping. At night when he slept and the moon was not on him, he dreamed of a beautiful woman, the Eve that came of his rib, and just as she appeared to him blushing he awoke to seize her in his arms, only to realize the emptiness of the darkness. Then all day as he worked he felt the heartache; all day there was the disappointment in his lips. When he could endure this no longer he hurried to Paris again to revel and forget with the crowd.

It was in the third year of this life that the whispering began to grow excited. Was it possible that this Galahad should love? He was attentive to one of their number, the queen of the women of Paris. She was a beauty from one of the southern provinces, who had risen from a simple village girl. In the village they said she had fallen, but not so in this free Latin Quarter.

Her form was moulded after Venus, and her flesh was the texture of pansies, such soothing, exquisite flesh; cool and rounded and mobile. To have her for a model meant success and our artist had his model when he chose. Beauty

and love seemed to be the food he had hungered for. Now when the woman had left him he sat long and silently thinking. Then he would turn and look at his canvas. He could paint this, though he could not paint the moonlight; the violet eyes with white heavy lids, the wealth of abundant auburn hair. Her favorite gown was one of lilac velvet, flowing full length away from her shoulders. The white shoulders and breast and full throat seemed to take up a tinct of the colour, and reproducing it in their own texture made it flush like the dawn of the sunlight. Then the deep hues of violet eyes; the queen-crown of rippling red hair! He wondered if he really loved as she sat there half beckoning to him.

As for her, there seemed little doubt; but then, loving, he knew, was her profession; moreover, who could not love this strong northern Viking, with the beauty of a god in his limbs and the haunting of lost souls in his eyes!

One night they were feasting together, and he told himself this doubting should cease. He would seize love and hold it in his arms. "More wine," he said to Adéle. "Let us drink to the bottom of the cup."

"To the bottom," she laughed in reply, and there was meaning in her violet eyes.

He rhymed and sang as he drank. He told her of the loves of his youth, and how all were ending in this. The woman understood as he talked; his passions were her own through her sympathy. He watched her as she lived his past life, and joyously came the dawn to him; he had found his love mate at last.

More wine, more confidence and more love; the glasses were clinking at their lips, so close were their faces together. What wealth in a perfect woman's body; what power in the round of curved line! Her breath flowed like spring o'er the meadows; hillocked meadows of her fruitful, rising breasts. Her eyes burned opal fire in deep wells; faint perfume exhaled from her blushing. The man put his hand out before him to push away the wine glass from between their lips: he knew that when he kissed her it would be for always, they could not be parted till death. Already he felt the completeness and satiety of living. He would never be alone now again. Relief for the yearning in his lips, fullness for the aching in his breast!

The wine glass well removed, the joy at last approaching consummation, what was it that

he saw in her face? What meant the trickling line about her mouth? Was it sensuality or a maudlin hint of the wine? He looked again. Surely it was not there; it had only been the trick of his imagination. Then faintly he saw it flicker again.

"What! you are not leaving?" gasped Adéle.

"I borrowed the janitor's latch key," he said, "and I promised to return it before midnight."

VII

AFTER some years, when his fame as an artist was well established, he went back to the little village of the cliff, for the hungry sea had not yet devoured it.

He found new inspiration for painting in the black, cunning water, in the opposing rock and the simple fisher folk who lived between them. In summer, when the cliff was fringed with green; in winter, when it was gleaming with snow and the water was of menacing blackness; in sunshine, in twilight; best of all in the chaste, white light of the moon, he painted this picture of his birthplace; and the world was not weary of praising it. He painted the village folk, too, and told them long tales from his travels.

Then there was a woman, Helma, for whom he had brotherly affection. She had long been a wife and a mother; had sons, indeed, who were out with the boats, and of whom she could justly speak with pride. The sons liked the great gentleman, who was as simple as any of

the fishers, and the husband liked him, too, best of all; for the two had been children together. They often joked about the early love for staid Helma. "She was not for me at all," thought the artist, but he was always kindly toward her when he met her.

He went up in the hills, too, one day and asked after news of Thorka. But she was not known there. The carrier's wife had died and the carrier had gone to America. "Did you not see him?" they asked. "We thought you, too, had gone to America."

Best of all, he loved to play with the children, and the young ones loved him more than they loved their own parents. He would tell them long stories without number, and show them the curious flowers and the insects. He would rollick and play with them, too. He was still the merriest soul in the village, and then he would watch with them when they were sick. His love for them never knew tiring. The mother was not more anxious and gentle than Svend, their Svend, who was known all over the world.

"You should marry and have lads of your own," the people said to him. To which he would reply with a laugh. Or if serious, he

would say, "I am waiting." Once when a little girl died he lived alone in the cliff for some weeks, climbing in places so impossible that the folk said he would never come back when they saw him set out in the morning.

Once there came a lady to the village, a lady traveling with her mother, who was a widow. When these two heard of the artist they asked him to come and see them. Then he was asked to paint a portrait of the lady, and so they came to be much together. She was very beautiful to paint. He seemed to live only for her picture. The village folk said that she was proud because of her dignified bearing. She looked upon them as quite different from herself. They often warned Svend against her, but he knew very many of her kind and only laughed at their croaking.

She was very slender and fair; almost the wind would break her over, only that she was so lithe and elastic. Her face was delicately patrician, but it softened when the artist looked upon it. The lips quivered, too, in a smile, and the blue eyes were more than he dared to show in his painting. Svend talked to her earnestly and simply. He seemed to be looking for something in her, something he could not de-

fine. When he was alone he thought now only of this lady, even when he was playing with the children; and all night he dreamed of her face.

One day they were sitting together looking out over the sea. The lady would go away on the morrow. He was wondering if he should tell her of his love. They were speaking lightly of rank and family and birth. He was used to the ways of patricians.

"Life is the same with lord and with peasant; there is little difference," he said.

"That is because you are a genius and hence an exception to the rule. With us who are but ladies and gentlemen we feel a distinction," she replied.

They were silent for a time, then she broke off the silence again. "Look at that old fishwife spreading a net on the sand. Do you think she is not different from my mother, who is so delicately broken now with her grief, and probably will never recover? No doubt this one has her feelings, but can you tell me that they are anything the same? Even granting the absurdity that they were, could my mother come to her as an equal? No, no, they are wholly different and unlike. God made one to

serve the other." The gentle excitement of the argument made the spiritual face almost saintly.

"No doubt you are right" he replied languidly." I never was clever at analysis." He rose as if on second thought and passed over toward the fish-wife of whom they had been speaking, the woman who was spreading the nets. His bearing was so lordly and simple. he must be a noble by birth, was what the lady was thinking. Then she listened to hear him speak. He was going to address the old fish-wife. She knew he would be kind to the most lowly.

"I shall be in to dinner on time to-day, mother. I am going out with father and Erik in the boat."

He returned to bid her farewell. "We may meet in Paris," he said. "I shall hope to see you next winter." But the lady knew from the gentleness in his voice that they would never be the same to one another again.

VIII

THERE is a restlessness that encircles the earth and no place will give peace till it has been visited. Svend was growing gray with world chasing. The haunting was becoming haggard in his eyes.

And yet he was gay with all people; ever a jest and a laugh if it were only to pass on the street. To all women he talked lightly and without meaning, though sometimes scanning them narrowly, as if he might be watching for something. They, in turn, came to him with serious matters, asking his advice and assistance, eager to give back of their own. But he always put them off with his kindness; put them off to seek out others anew.

Women! the world was filled up with women; and among them he walked quite alone. There were the beautiful of India and the East, the dainty maids of Japan, dimpling smile-beams. The Arab had eyes like the moonlight. The Spanish were of ivory flesh. Once when painting in far off New Zealand he met the

queen of them all. Only he was not content, but took up his wandering Eastward.

He was in his fortieth year, lounging out the winter in Egypt, when he came upon Catharine Farr. He felt the change in himself at once. New work began planning within him. Catharine Farr was a noted English woman who had never written book or painted picture. None the less she was intimate with the genius of Europe. Her conversation was celebrated throughout the land.

He had been listlessly gazing at the pyramids, half sleeping, vacant minded and languid. This woman came mincing over towards him; a little woman dowdily dressed. She had a long nose and sharp chin, her face was sallow and plain. Her hair was combed down in affectation.

"You are Svend, the painter," she began. "And I am Catharine Farr.

There was a light in her pale greenish eyes that caught his intelligence at once. He leaped to his feet like an athlete who has waited his call to the contest.

"That is better," said Catharine Farr, wagging her head sagaciously. "One can be too idle, even in Egypt." Soon they began speak-

ing of the pyramids and speculating on the people who built them. Catherine Farr did not speculate carelessly. She knew all the scholars had learned. She began picturing the ancient civilization, and the people seemed to walk in procession before the painter as she talked. They loved and hated and were ambitious. They were kind or cruel as she willed.

"I must study their art more closely," said Svend, "and then I will paint a great picture. How I wish you could help me."

"It is easily done," she replied. "I am doing some research here myself. We can agreeably combine our labors. I have long desired to know you, but you flit about the world like a firefly. There is a flash, and some gallery is illumined; all of the artists are gathering around, and behold there is only the reflection left in your pictures. Your light is in some other quarter?"

"Appreciation is so wearisome," said Svend.

"Of course, when the work is completed, your interest has worked itself out. But find some one to appreciate when you are beginning, and their words are like honey on the lips."

"There is no one," he said dejectedly. "The

very few men who can know are deep in work of their own, and the women——"

"The women can't know," she interrupted. "You are too chivalrous to say it. But I am a woman and may speak."

"At all events it will be different with this new picture," he laughed, "for you have already begun to help me."

They worked together every morning for some weeks, studying the walls of the temples. At night he would puzzle at his composition, and in the afternoon on some excursion they would discuss it. His subject was "The Building of the Pyramids," in name. In reality it was the philosophy of life. It was treated in the ancient Egyptian manner but in every way was modern for all that. "It must contain all the knowledge and philosophy that the world has contained up to this day," said Catharine Farr.

"Added to it must be all the beauty," said Svend, with the dreams in his eyes.

There was a face or figure to represent each leading humor or passion. The young prince ambitious with hope, the toiler whose father had begot him in weariness, not knowing the intelligence of despair; the frivolous think-

ing of their appearance or the parroting of some nothing they had heard; the astronomer waiting for the stars, lost in thought-wanderings out in the ether; the priest and devotee of religion; the lover; and the mother with her child. In the great canvas were scores of meaning faces; nor yet was the human element excessive, for in the center towered the stone of the pyramids; and floating over and suffusing them all was the wealth of the duskening twilight, the whispering of on-coming death.

There was one figure that gave them much torment, long argument and final disagreement. It was the poet overlooking the crowd, and turning half longingly to the twilight. Nowhere could Svend get a model. Catharine Farr said he should paint in himself. Her argument was certainly logical. He could adapt his face to the Egyptian requirements; the color was not different from his sun-bronze. The blonde in his hair was well gray, the lonesomeness was all in his eyes. Paint and change as he would, he could not paint the lonesomeness out. "It belongs there," said Catharine Farr. "It is the true soul of the poet." But Svend was in a rage with himself. He would

not endure this confession. "I shall make him a drunkard," he said at length, "and the poet shall be the old, classical model." So he put in sensuality around the mouth and feeble contortions in the limbs; but he left the lonely haunting in the eyes. "The eyes" he said, "are too good to paint out."

Catharine Farr was irascible for days, and scarcely would look at the painting.

The work was finished in time and sent to Paris for exhibition. "Svend has painted his masterpiece," exclaimed the critics. But the artists still remembered his moonlight.

Catharine Farr had also finished her work. "Come and spend the late winter in Rome," she said.

"As well Rome as anywhere else," replied Svend. "Better Rome when with Catharine Farr."

Always the woman was fresh inspiration for him. He had never been more steadily industrious in his life. Her talk teemed with motives for his pictures.

He took a studio in Rome and began a series of historical paintings which were really the creations of her learning. She knew every cor-

ner of the city—she had known it since Romulus and Remus. It grew to encircle seven hills for his enlightenment. Then, naturally, it fell to decay.

The two friends were constantly together, in their walks, in the studio, in their excursions out of the city, in the evenings reading their books. Catharine Farr had the habit of bringing her work to the studio in the morning and sitting with her books while he painted. Her presence became necessary to his work. He was restless and could not continue without her.

Often she would ask him to paint her portrait, but he was repeatedly putting her off. He was afraid of the plainness of her features. Afraid that he could not catch the spirit that enlightened them. Sometimes she was beautiful when she talked.

With the summer they were journeying northward, living in the coolness of the spring.

"It is not right to defy nature in this fashion," said Catharine Farr, once with vehemence. "We should sit down and patiently live the seasons through. What right have we to eternal springtime and autumn, avoiding the experiences of extremes?"

Svend wondered if there were meaning in these words. He wondered if he should speak to her of love. They were walking through some pasture land in the south of England, searching for relics of stone. Catharine Farr was a tireless ethnologist, and Svend had painted a series of pictures of the primitive ages which were now the art talk of London.

Svend was considering and considering. He knew that he must make up his mind. They had talked of spending the winter in Constantinople. Would it be on his wedding journey? He had thought this over constantly of late. Would it be possible for him to live without her? He had never been less lonely in his life. To-day she was walking on ahead of him, peering about among the pebbles of a bank. Her short skirt was of a dark purple. Her clumpy, English boots stuck out beneath. What a mincing affectation was in her gait. "We must return to this gravel bank often," she cried.

"But first I am going to have my way," said Svend, "for I am going to begin on your portrait."

They went back to the studio that night, each knowing that a change was beginning. They

were coming to the summer of love. The winter, too, might some time be theirs.

Next morning Svend was ready with his canvas. "Sit so," he commanded. "Now look at me steadily for a time."

As the days went by and the portrait began to grow, Catharine Farr became restless. She did not like the hardness in his eyes. He looked at her without so much as recognizing who she was. She was merely a scheme of line and colour to him. There was nothing human in the watching of his eyes.

She grew almost petulant in her affectation. He could hardly keep his portrait from a simpering expression, when he meant to paint the enthusiasm of the history of men.

"Do not look at me with that stony, professional stare," she called out once at the end of a long, wearisome sitting. "It is I, Catharine Farr, and you are my friend, Svend, the painter."

He made no reply, but kept painting. His strokes were rapid and steady.

She rose up and walked away to the window. She would not endure the hardness in his eyes. Still he kept on with his brush. He made no comment on her going.

For full fifteen minutes she stood staring out the window at the sky, then she turned upon him querulously, almost sharply.

"Are you never going to leave off?" she asked.

He did not yet reply for a moment. The brush was still delicately flying. Then he turned and laid his palette down with a sigh. "It is done," he replied to her triumphantly. "Let me put it in the frame for you to see."

Catharine Farr was satisfied with the portrait. The plainness of her features was overcome by the wonderful spirit glowing beneath. She and all the world could see that. She had never been interpreted before. When Svend, the painter, looked at the picture now, she saw all his friendship for her in his face. But once he had turned again to her, there was only the knowledge of a scheme of line and colour, the sallow face with the long nose and weak chin, the pursing mouth and the round greenish eyes framed by the thin and ugly hair, combed down in simpering affectation.

He seemed to keep this difference for some days. Then gradually it all melted to kindness.

"For I am going away," he said gently. "An old friend has been begging me to accom-

pany him on a four years' voyage of exploration to the Antarctic continent, and gradually I am seeing that I must go. I must learn to paint ice before I die."

IX

PERHAPS there is no way in which man can more clearly realize his position in the solar system, than by taking habitation on the ocean, and traveling from Arctic to Antarctic, guided by the swinging of the stars.

Always the plowing of the propeller, always the sliding waters on the bow tell of movement on our planet. Then, as the days fold away into weeks, as the weeks are building into months, we watch the faint sun which was southward warming and growing as it advances toward the zenith. The north star is paling and sinking, the great dipper is dipping in the sea. Then the fierce sun is burning overhead, warming the deep to a mill-pond. Farewell to the north heavens of our childhood. The white cross is flashing before us, the sun now receding behind is sailing in circles as we advance, winding to its magnetized center, like the wild hawk of old in the north.

We have touched points of land as we came. They but helped to measure our progress. There was only one land for us, the ice-fettered

continent of the pole, silent and alone in the water.

But always even, when the land was reached, it was the stars that made up the universe. The earth was but the satellite of the sun; the sun but a tiny star among the millions. Far in dreams was the past world of people. Here were a few friends in a ship, but all lived in the world of astronomy. All measured their time by star ages. Their thoughts roamed, despairing of limits.

To Svend the moon was most human of all. How strange that his old love should be here smiling on the deserts of ice. He used to lace himself into his thickest furs, and amidst the expostulations of them all, walk out in the silver cold light, away toward the loneliness of the land where the round moon was illuminating the mountains.

His passion was old in him now. It had worn itself out on itself. He often tried to yearn as before, but he found that the power was not in him. Now he could paint the moonlight, he could shut his eyes almost and do it, so well he had the knowledge of its glowing, white, genius fires, so well he knew the feelings it incited. The younger men stood before his

pictures, and he could see the marks of pain on their lips, they were feeling the power of his moon; only he felt the power no more. He painted with science and precision and juggled with the holiness of his youth, as one laughs at an earlier weakness.

There was one young man who stood before the pictures so understandingly, that Svend came to have familiar feelings of possession for him. It was as if this youth were his son who was to carry on the life that now he felt he was losing. "Heaven forbid," murmured Svend, and one night he invited him out on an excursion, seeking new memories for his work. Soon they were often together. They were like the father and the son, and the young man told Svend once when they were alone, how he was betrothed to a girl up in Sweden, his voice softened to tenderness as he spoke of her. For many days Svend went about with a new thankfulness and happiness in his heart. This, his son, should not live the loneliness he had lived.

There was sickness and affliction on the ship. Once death came among them with his strangeness, and took away the youngest and

the gayest of the party. When Svend heard that the lad was dead, his heart stopped beating in his breast. They thought he was falling in a faint. "If this had been my son," he was thinking.

When there were perilous voyages to make as they worked at surveying the country, when there were battles with the treacherous ice, when they needed a brave man and daring, they all came to turn towards Svend. Svend, the Viking, the gray-bearded giant. How active he was, too, like a sailor, and hearty as any among them. Sometimes, half under their breath, these sailors working with him called him "thou," and saw in his eyes how he liked it. He was their hero, their father, and their king. Not one, but would have given life for him.

The seasons waned, the ship went northward for winter to return and work steadily again. The little company had become like one family, it seemed the ship had always been their birthright. Each was jealous when the others should go back and take up other relatives again; yet each was growing hungry for the time, each craved the luxury of meeting with strangers.

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The time did come slowly at length. The day was set when they should turn finally northward. They would round again the bulging of the equator, they would see again the beloved northern heavens. In their dreams now the polar star was shining.

On the last night before leaving the land Svend made ready for a journey with his moon. "Let me go with you," said the youth, and there was a dumb pleading in his eyes. But Svend spoke to him steadily and gently. "You may walk with me part way," he said. "After that I must go on alone."

Together they set forth; the moonlight lay like sunshine on the plain. They headed toward some mountain rising icebergs. The winter was already closing them in. "You must go back here," said Svend after a time.

"But the drifting ice is dangerous, you will not, you must not go further," said the youth.

"To me there is but one danger, and that is far from here. But I promise you I will not take risks; I will be very careful," replied Svend.

When the youth had left him reluctantly to return to the camp, Svend stood for some time

by the ice. It was creaking and groaning at times with the imprisoned water underneath. The water seemed to him like his love. That, too, was prisoned in his breast.

Then with long, swinging stride and running leap he began his journey to the icebergs. "I will be very careful," he said. He was thinking of the youth who had returned.

What wonder it was to be alone here among the rising ice mountains, luminous and transparent with the moon. The cold struck to him like steel in the heart, but he was warm with the glow of his ecstasy. Everywhere the white fire burned. Everywhere the holy genius emanated, the pure flames of faith were in the hilltops. The white light of heaven was the air.

"It is beauty, it is truth, it is the supreme good," said Svend, as he made his way back. "But now I must return among men and take up my search for realization. I am old, but not too old to love. This night gives me still proof of that."

When the ship was nearing port in the North, the men were all tremulous for home. They talked of nothing else all day long. Svend alone among them sat silent. The wide world

was his, but no home. "You must come to my home," said the youth. "My mother has the finest house in Stockholm."

Stockholm was as good as any city. It was comfortable to see the fatherland again. Svend took a studio there and went often to see the youth and his mother, and the fair girl who in a year should be a bride.

He found that the youth had not overstated when he said that his mother had the finest house in Stockholm. Fru Ahlberg was famous as a house-keeper. She had wealth to supply every luxury, and the good taste not to over supply. In many ways she was a remarkable woman, in all of the womanly ways, it seemed. Svend came to realize that he had never known her life; to wonder what she had been in her youth. Fru Ahlberg was beautiful still, perhaps more beautiful at fifty than at twenty. There was knowledge, now, in her eyes.

She moved about the home that she had made, peaceful and smiling and benignant. No woman had such soothing, winning ways. And these men were starving for her comforts. At one time Svend was near sickness, and they made him come to their white house, and assigned to him three immaculate rooms. It was

as if he had always been here, so perfect were the ways of his hostess.

It is impossible to express to the untravelled the deliciousness of clean rooms and white linen, the delicacy of gentle, even warmth, the odors of faint lavender and house flowers, the satisfaction of well cooked and flavoured food.

Svend was wearied by life restlessness and travel. He liked the even regularity of this life, He almost wished that he might ever more be ill, so that this woman could care for him.

Fru Ahlberg read to him from old books, or embroidered as she talked to him of her life. Such even, simple life had been hers! She was left a widow at twenty, when the son was barely a year old. Her husband had been a little wild; perhaps had handed down adventure to the boy. Since he died she had been occupied as mother, as a member of the society that she knew, beloved and loving with them all in gentle way, the counsellor and helper of many.

The months of the year passed by, and all was preparation for the youth's coming marriage. "He will be much away now," sighed Fru Ahlberg. "I shall not have the same reason for living any more." How well Svend had

come to know her. How quietly she had grown into his life.

One evening the youth came to him blushing. "I have longed to speak with you," he said, "and yet I am afraid of my position. It is not fitting for a son to speak so to his father."

"Let us be comrades then" said Svend. "What is it that you wish to say to me?"

The youth stammered and blushed still more, then gradually he forced the words from him. He wanted to say, that if Svend had thoughts of really becoming his father, if he was holding back because he feared to shock his love, why he wanted to explain that it would be no shock to him at all, that nothing could make him happier in the world than to celebrate a double family wedding.

Svend thanked the youth kindly when he said "Good night." He had never felt so close to him before, not even in the loneliness of the ice fields under the wintry polar moon.

That night as Svend slept he dreamed. He dreamed of the beautiful woman, with the luminous eyes and gray hair, the floating hair with the waywardness of youth. He felt her cool hands on his forehead. He was feverish and wanted their sympathy. He wanted, too,

the sympathy of her cheek, the cheek still blooming soft and pink.

Then suddenly the dream changed, the woman was changing to another, a younger woman with passion in her eyes, with warm arms and breast of lithe, sweet youth; with calmness only in her everlasting love. "No, no; I must have perfect love or none," he thought long after he awoke. "I must have passion; I must have all a wife can give. My Eve must live alone for me."

He stayed with the youth till he was married; he stayed some weeks to comfort the sad mother. Always he grew kinder every day, but the distance was widening between them.

X

THE wanderer had built himself a house, had settled into the conventions of civilization. "Now, you ought to get a wife," said his friends. "A neat little housekeeper to keep you tidy."

The house was an old one in Paris. Svend had fitted it up from dilapidation, and filled it with breezy, light draperies and delicate ware from old shops. "Now a housekeeper," said all of his friends. "A neat little wife to take care of things."

The house had a garden, too, though quite near the heart of the city, an old and overgrown garden that had been pretentious in its time. There were arched passage-ways cut in arbor vitæ, there were tall trees and statues and a fountain where the falling leaves settled and decayed.

With the house he had taken other duties as well. He had established a school for young painters. "The others are not sufficient," he said. The school had become very popular, and many English and American students

came to it. It had been established now, some years, and was one of the accepted institutions in Paris. Sometimes Svend would talk to "his children"; talk to them of the earnestness of their profession, plead for a genuineness of living, an honesty and simplicity of beauty. They called him "the old man" and "father," though he was as strong and as active as the best. There were many poor students who could not pay, but they received as much attention as the others.

From a little window in his house, one that opened out of an alcove in his chamber, Svend could look down into another garden, one high walled and secluded like his own, but narrow and much more confined. Two English girls were usually walking there, or romping, or working with the flowers. He used to see them there often. He could watch them grow from year to year. "When will they quit the little garden?" he asked himself. "What will they find better outside?"

The older girl's name was Madge, the younger one's was Lucy. He could hear them calling each other often, but they never heard anything of him. One day an impulse came to him. It was a spring day and the girls were

laughing with the apple blooms. Svend did not question the impulse, he threw his pipe out the window, and then cautiously put out his head. The girls were looking up laughing.

"My pipe is in your garden," he called.

Then there was discussion how he should get it. Lucy said she would bring it right over, but Madge cautioned that Aunt Martha might not like it. "I will let down a string," suggested Svend, and they laughed when the pipe went up dangling, it looked so funny on the string.

"Light it and smoke," called up Lucy. "I love to watch a man smoking." Here Madge cautioned her sister again. "He is older than our father," pouted Lucy. "Besides, everybody knows the great painter. I have wanted to speak to him for months."

That was the beginning of their acquaintance. Soon they were most intimate neighbors.

Svend learned that Aunt Martha was an invalid, but that she delighted in afternoon calls. For once in his life he grew formal and sat in her stiff parlor chairs. The father was an officer in India. They lived in Paris for the schools. Their father thought them safer, too,

in Paris. He doubtless was a man with his whims.

While Lucy was rollicking and boyish, Madge was sweetly coming into womanhood. She was childish often as her sister, and then she would grow serious and pensive. The garden was becoming narrow and uninteresting to her.

"Come into my garden," advised Svend. Aunt Martha was consulted and it was arranged.

The gardener made a rustic ladder. It was half in the trees by the wall. If there had been no other reason for going over, it was inducement enough just to climb the ladder. Svend hardly touched his feet to the rounds, and often he carried Lucy over royally, but Madge modestly delayed to arrange her skirts and joined them later in their rompings.

Of course the girls must learn to draw, and who was more fitted for a master than the famous painter, their neighbour? Lucy was given to playing with her fancies, but Madge improved steadily from the first. She had talent, and drew pretty things and flowers very precisely. She had good taste with colour as

well. "It is better than going to the school," she answered him once when he had praised her. "I should like to live always in this garden," and Svend felt a warmth in his heart.

What gay times they had there that summer, what tea parties, and readings and stories. Svend was coming to their youth again, and they were advancing to his age. They were coming to love him too, they were growing jealous of each other. As for Svend, he loved them both dearly, but it was different, the way he loved Madge.

One day he could see they had been quarreling, though they tried to conceal if from him. That was late in September. They had been out on a long excursion. Several times on that day he had been at the point of telling Madge of his love, his love that had grown youthful for her, but Lucy had as often interrupted. The child Lucy had been more childish than usual on these times. She had thrown her arms around his neck, and pressed her face up to his quite passionately. With joy that he blamed himself for, he could see what pain this gave Madge. "I will tell her," he kept saying, as he watched. "I have found out my love in old age."

That night he was looking from his window, when she came out alone in the garden, and he saw her cross over to his own. In the moonlight he went down to meet her.

She was startled to find him out so late, and made faint excuse to return. He put his arm around her to detain her, he looked down his love into her eyes.

The girl turned and threw her arms around his neck as passionately as Lucy had done. More than that, she kissed him on the face, she kissed him on the eyes, the hair and beard. He carried her to a seat in the garden and wrapped her in his coat which he took off. All the time he held her in his arms, she kept murmuring but one phrase, " I love you."

" What a child she is, after all! " reflected Svend. " It is not right to take this advantage," but he kissed her on the forehead at parting, it seemed to him a kiss of farewell.

The next day, they were calmer and could reason. Lucy was feverish with illness in her bed. Aunt Martha had become well to nurse her.

" You must first go out and see something of the world," said Svend decidedly. " You must go to my school for a year. There are young

women there, and young men. After that," here he stopped and looked into her eyes, but he did not let the name of wife pass his lips.

It was decided, and permission was obtained. Madge reluctantly made ready for the school. At first she found it irksome enough. It would have been unendurable quite, except that her hero came occasionally. Later on she began to get acquainted and was interested in the lives of the girls. Svend watched her jealously. Yes, she became interested in the men. His love for her was growing new growth, but his justice would not let it take possession of him. "I will reason," he said, "to the last."

The end of the year came, and her interest was in one of the men. She came to Svend with love as of old, but there was a difference in the motive of her caresses. "I will wait another year," thought Svend. And she did not remind him that this one was ended.

The spring came again, the third spring, now, he had known her. Lucy had been in England more than a year. The child had insisted on going to live with another aunt.

Svend was working now like a demon, a great series of pictures for decoration, the joys and the yearnings of youth. He was painting

youth as he grew older. At one time, he was fondest of old age.

One night, after struggling with his compositions, he walked out into the cool of the garden. The apple blooms were falling like snow flakes. The half moon was sinking in the West. Then Madge came creeping over the ladder. "May I come down on your side, Svend?" she called. "I heard you walking on the gravel, and I have wanted to tell you something."

She put her arms around his neck and held him close as of old. "Dear old father," she said. "I have wanted to tell you I am so happy. You are so loving and good, I am sure you will be happy with me. Arthur has asked me to be his wife. He says that he loves me, dear father Svend." And she buried her face on his shoulder.

Svend watched the sinking moon as he caressed her. His hand was most fatherly on her hair. He watched the moon till it was gone. "You must go in now," was all he said. "You know all the joy that I wish you."

For three weeks, night and day, Svend worked away on his pictures. One day he fell on the scaffold. A youth caught him or he

would have fallen off. The youth loved him and thought he was dying. They carried him away to a physician, his right side was like a body quite dead.

"It is paralysis," said the physician gravely.

"He has worked too hard," said his friends.

Svend lay with a dumb trembling mouth, the yearning now gone from one side. He was horribly like some monster in his contortions. His feeble thoughts were, "I shall never paint more."

XI

A PATIENT year of lying in bed, and another of creeping about the house and Svend was something of himself again, though his right hand was uncertain in its movements.

"You might be improved by mountain air and travel," said the physician.

"I will go to America," said Svend. "It is big and one never gets tired of it."

For a year he wandered about in the wildernesses of the western mountains. He found he liked the deserts best; they lay most near to his sympathies. Still, his hand was too feeble for work. "What matter is there for living?" asked Svend.

There was a party of gold seekers going into the famed Death Valley. They had heard stories of gold lying so plenteous one could pick up a fortune in a few days.

"I will go along with you," said Svend, and in their eagerness for money and supplies they did not say he should not. Moreover, they were used to letting a man do as he liked. In the party were men older than Svend.

Over the blistering alkali they rode, it was three days to the shimmering mountains. "There may be water there, they said, if not we have three days to come back. There is risk, but there is a chance, too, of gold."

They marched without hesitation in direct and unbroken line. They talked and laughed, even, sometimes; but always there was a fanaticism in their eyes. They were charmed by their own dreams of gold. "It is as if they were searching for love," thought Svend. "What matter is it what they search—love, gold, or beauty, or truth? The end is in the Valley of Death."

It was the fourth day when they came to the mountains, and they were dry as the cracks of the plain. The horses were beginning to die. "We must leave them and cross over," said the men. "There may be water on the other side of the mountain. It is impossible now to go back." When a horse staggered, they left him, taking things most needed from his pack. "When a man staggers we will leave him too," they agreed. "There is no time to waste now on sentiment."

For two days they had been without water; their entrails were as dry as the desert. Their

throats were swollen and black. Still the mountains would not furnish them water, the cañons were as sapless as the peaks.

The men were separating now and wandering aimlessly. The gold lust was fading from their eyes.

Svend found himself walking alone. He did not know how it had happened, but he was heading straight on for the plain. There seemed new life in his limbs. He thought he was searching for love, for the Eve that came of his rib. At first he argued it was his delirium, but he had never seemed more sane in his life. His past was vivid before him.

A little alkali knoll rounded up on the plain. Svend was beginning to grow weary and sat down for a moment to rest. His eyes wandered off to the horizon. He was thinking of all he had lived.

The dancing mirage of the desert, seemed to come nearer and nearer. The lakes were not two miles away. The groves were waving in the wind. There were cities with temples and gardens. Steadily, fantastically they advanced, or was it women advancing? The bright light was quivering in the sky. It was surely women now he saw, the women he had known

in his life, they were pleading and beckoning to him, then they were laughing and fading away. His parched eyes were straining for Eve, for one who would not change in laughter. He saw now quite clearly the women. What had been one, became now another. Blue eyed Helma became Catharine Farr, and saintly Ruth was the rich, warm French model. Yes, they all looked alike to him now. They all had the same rippling laughter, so womanly it could not be human, the murmurous soft accents of spirits.

Svend laid himself down, weary, to sleep. His tired eyes closed like a child's. "I see it quite plainly," he sighed. "Why did not the rest come before? How clear it all is to me now! This is not Eve I have followed; this is Lilith, only, who was haunting me. Creation is yet not completed. I must lie down and sleep till the morning."

The delirium of death seized him then, for his life's strength had not yet been conquered. He had now lost all likeness to a man, and was a wild wolf dying of rabies. He writhed and crawled around on the knoll, plowing in the alkali dust. The white foam was like pumice in his mouth, his eyes were past all power of

seeing. Sharp, wolf-like barks snarled from his crusted throat; his arms and legs were clutching convulsively. His ribs were groaning with sighs; only his right hand lay limp, the hand that had been clever with cunning.

The sun set, a burning ball of dust, and the violet twilight succeeded, only the hot wind did not abate. It was curling like a draught from a furnace. The white full moon rose up from behind the shadows of the mountains; still the strange living thing tortured on, barking and gasping and quivering.

The round moon was high in the zenith before this black pain-speck grew still. But the moon could conquer him yet, and gradually her balm was effective. The white knoll glowed like a funeral pyre, white with the heat. It seemed to burn on the desert, itself had become luminous with lighting.

The black tiny speck that lay on it would soon be consumed into dust. Already the swirling alkali lay upon it, wreathing and capricious with mirth. The Valley of Death claims its own; even the mountains of life shall be levelled.

The Man and the Lake

The Man and the Lake

THERE was once a man who fell in love with a lake; and the history of the passion and how it culminated, I now shall tell to you.

The man was strong and young and rugged. He had crisp, curling hair, hair that grows thickly on the head, and such as women's hands delight to soften. It was of the colour of sunshine when coming through thick smoke, not yellow nor yet brown; such hair as will make all sensitive people love the owner. His beard, too, was crisp and curling as his hair. He himself only thought of it as shaggy. It was so, indeed, but he had never stopped to think how beautiful the rugged shagginess of healthy youth is. His lips were pink with health and firmness: sweet sensitive lips, half hidden by the straggling, yellow beard around. His face was white and curiously free of expression. The whiteness was almost stonelike; it is im-

possible otherwise to describe it. I speak of all these things because I know that one who is fond of faces and used to reading them, will recognize in this a character that is deep and passionate by nature, but always has the truth so well concealed that an ordinary looker there will see only apathy and strength, which still will fascinate as apathy and strength in themselves can never do.

Best of all among the sturdy, irregular features of this man were the lambent, gray eyes that shone so steadily out. They were as tender as the lips, and sometimes in them played a greenish fire that even the best of face readers can never understand. By some it is thought to come from Heaven, and often it is said to be of Hell. Why shall we speculate at all when we can call it earthly and have done? The two kingdoms are here on earth, we know of that; the man wondered sometimes if they were anywhere else.

When the man came into our story he was walking at a steady pace over the hills of a little back province of Italy. He was not ungraceful as he walked, though many would say he was too thick and sturdy. The fact was that his bodily beauty was concealed by his gar-

ments. It is only the lean and thin man who is really elegant when dressed. The perfect form is made for nakedness; but we will speak of the man's bodily beauty when we come to it.

Just now he was stepping evenly on his uphill road, his tired knapsack weighing on his shoulders, though his cap was tipped to let the sunshine in his eyes, and the pink, firm lips were whistling merrily. Perhaps nothing at all at the time was in the man's mind. He was working and he was happy.

Soon he had reached the top of the hill, and a new valley lay stretched before him. Then he stopped suddenly and the lips formed sounds no more. He had seen the lake.

There it lay, smiling a greeting to him, levelling away placidly into the miles of vista to the mountains. Not brighter than gray-blue in the foreground, but gradedly deepening and glowing with the colour till blue names are but hopeless to express it; bluer, bluer, bluer, into the channeled depths of Alp, the man's eyes were shimmering and his throat convulsive, but the heart was pouring out such wealth of glory and of praise as lips or pen may never know or conjure.

If one has been in love he may stop here to

understand and ponder. If he is not sure—and many men have grown old, I think, without ever truly loving—let him hasten on with the story. He will not understand it, of course, but that will enable him to talk the more about it, so that it is but little matter.

The hill on which the man was standing was hardly a hill at all, he found in time, but only a bank that overlooked the lake; already he thought of the lake only as his own. Below him and within the reach of voice, among the wet and level green of rushes, a boy was watching some cows that were feeding greedily. But a few steps away, again, two fishermen were wading about attending to some box-like nets or traps. That was all, for again the man's sight was creeping back into the deepening radiance of the blue, prayerfully, on, on, till it pierced the driving whiteness of the cloud that swept across the snow-capped mountains; then, resting in the vividness of misty light and shadow at their feet, it fixed itself and set till the tears came and gave the ecstasy relief.

Along the shores of the lake to right and left were varied outlines leading to the purity of the mountains beyond. To the right were rolling, grassy hills with flocks and lonely dwellings

and the peace of agriculture. Farther back into the wooded slopes the thin blue spirals of smoke floated up and away to tell of charcoal burners' huts more lonely than the farmers' homes. Then were the Alps themselves piled behind like clouds white in the sky and blue at horizon line, impenetrable and limiting in all. Impossible was it to imagine that land could lie beyond and earthly men be dwelling there.

On the left, or westward, the coast of the lake was much more sharp and rugged. There were cliffs, sometimes, and rocks glistening white in the sunshine. Often these were grayed with vineyards and orchards, while villages were nestling there among them, sloping up white and beautiful to the hilltops, where bell-tower or ruin of old castle lifted itself into the solid blue of sky. One village, the one lying nearest the man, was flat and near the rushes. It seemed to have no houses of great folk or even of the well-to-do, but was a village of the fishers and the lowly.

"I will stop in this little village," said the man finally coming to himself, "and I will live alone with my lake."

But there were still three hours of day, and what need at all to hurry? The air was warm

and soothing, the grass of the bank was inviting. It was only a moment's work to swing off the knapsack and arrange for comfort. Then the dreams of the lover began, and in all that he dreamed, his present love, the lake, gave of her colour thereto.

There was childhood first, passionate and changeable at the time, calm and sweet in the memory that now was strongest in him. How would it have been holier still if his lake had been with him to worship! Youth next, its restlessness, its work and reception; then budding manhood, aching with growth and yearning, no answer to his lighter questionings, no satisfaction to the thousand desires that fevered him. Ah, if then he had but known the sweet entirety of this water! but no, he was rushed into the warring experience of manhood; he had struggled, hoped and failed, and never yet had come to him a comforter like this that understood him now. By degrees he came to review the details of his present life, and to dwell on the friends that he had left not yet a year ago. Just now it did not occur to him that there was anything different in his thoughts of them, but it was all different, almost; for now in thinking of these same friends

that he had so often thought of before, he did not long for their presence as had been his wont. Later he came to know that he could not even bear to tell them of his thoughts, while as for their once urged letters to him, they were safe in the post far away, along with the railways and telegraph wires and the rest of noisy civilisation.

The sunset came on, with the wind and rose-light that swept the sky and the mountains with showers of celestial rain. The lake, however, remained untouched and toned in contrast to a wild sea green. The man waited, wondering, till the light was wellnigh faded, and then reluctantly took up his knapsack and hurried along the road. In the main the road kept close to the shore, and he did not find the journeying difficult; but once, when the way bent in toward the country in order to avoid a little hill, it was very hard for him to continue, and even the enriched green of the mulberry trees in the royal twilight colour would not suffice to comfort him. When he emerged again—and it was like coming back to life—all the glow had settled in a bank in the west, and the mountains just beneath it were dyed in richest purple. There was still a mile walk to the

village, so that when the man was ready to go indoors both lake and land were chilled to slaty blue by the twilight creeping from the east.

In the village he found a neat little inn kitchen, with brick floor and white walls. A fire was quickly lighted and the widow's pretty daughter despatched for the simple ingredients of his supper, for, strange as it may seem for a public house, there is never one cent's worth of *maccheroni* kept in stock in provincial Italy, but the landlady waits till the visitor has ordered and then goes out to purchase the exact amount.

The little copper kettle swung on the crane, the woman salted, stirred and tasted, the firelight gleamed in the copper dishes hung in polished geometric patterns on the wall, the man struggled at conversation in a new dialect and petted the cat and dog that came to him for sympathy. He was quite at home, it seemed, in the little household, and later, when he had gone up stairs to his clean, white room the widow and her daughter were enthusiastic over the cordiality of the northern young stranger. But, in reality, all this time the man had been steadily thinking in undertone, wondering how the lake looked without, and whether it was cheery or gloomy in the darkness.

The thought came to him suddenly as he was just on the point of getting into bed that there might be a view from the window. He opened the swinging French sash and stepped out on to the tiny balcony. There lay the lake before him lapping its waves in the rushes, and far across, just clear from the horizon line, hung the weazened, belated moon blown by the winds of the mountains. The man went back hastily and put out his candle-light. Such earthliness could not be thought of lighting here. Then he came out on the balcony again and letting his soul-sight float over the sheeny water he knelt him down to pray.

Whether his prayers were to God that night, I cannot tell.

Not many days had passed, but it seemed to the man that this new life had been with him always, so lethe-like were the blue waters of his new companion.

He had found, not more than a mile from the level village, a little cove shut in by rocks, so solitary that man never wandered there, it seemed, and even the cattle and goats were but infrequent visitors. Here there were no rushes to tempt them, for the water beat up on a beach of whitest sand. Already the man thought of

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this spot as his own, his and the lake's. He had never owned a home that was so much a part of him. He would sit here idly, over his book in the shade of a shrubby grove of trees that grew among the rocks and let his eyes rest contentedly on the shifting blueness of the loved expanse that seemed to change and humanise for him; to smile him joy or quiver him sweet comfort; to whisper of the right and the wisdom of the world, and bid him be of courage and of peace. At all times when his thoughts took shape enough for words he would speak them frankly to his lake, and often in his tenderer moments he would breathe his vows of constancy and say how he was never going from her here, for here was life complete, nor could it now be possible for him to live it otherwise.

It was on the morning after the first night in the village that he had in a vague way pledged himself. An hour of rest in the secluded bay had been but preparation for the morning bath, and yet when he had sprung up heartily and thrown aside his garments, he hesitated and was reverently loath to enter the water. It seemed a sacrilege, a contamination of the purity of the lake. Then he looked down his

own length of beautiful body. Was ever angel more divinely, radiantly beautiful? More radiantly surely not, but as for divinely, we cannot safely say. It may be that the angels are unconscious of their charm, and this man saw his perfection.

He stood up white and gleaming in the sunshine, a perfect man. How strong and free his posture! How virile every member! The shaggy, yellow hair and close, cropped beard were explained, now that the hideous coarseness of cloth was removed, and the natural skin shone clear and white as ivory, with mellowed shading of the short and crisping hair that covered it, that lengthened and darkened like the beard in featuring relief upon the sturdy breast, in the modest armpits and the white downslanting joining of the gleaming channels of the groin.

The whiteness of his face was, too, an added beauty; for being of the texture of the rest there showed no untanned contrast to tell of the bondage of civilisation. There he stood as wild and free as a creature of the wood; head alert, delicate and noble in line; strong breast and arms, the refuge and defense of loved ones; sides as graceful in the flow of line as the pro-

file of a Greek vase; the clasped strength and vigor of the loins; the rounded contour and taper of the limbs,—all such as poets have given to their figures of the gods to make them more than human.

Perhaps the man was conscious of his worth, for now with childish joyousness of action he walked down the sloping sand of the beach into the limpid blue of lapping water as if it were his native element. Only when it was rising swirlingly above his knees did he stop for a moment, and scooping a handful of the blue purity in his palm he raised it reverently to his lips. I am not sure what thoughts were going on within him at the time; but from the lurking play of fire in his eyes, and from the stiffening quiver of the lips, we may divine, perhaps, that holy prayers of consummation were rising in his heart and widening out over the level blue extent of sunny sparklingness, even unto the bounding, haze-fogged mystery of the mountains.

Then, suddenly, as if the rite was instantaneously sanctioned by the universe, the gleaming arms shot straightly up above the head, and lightly as the wild deer leaping, the lithe, white, forward-darting body lifted, balanced,

curved, then bent in graceful line toward rest again, until it disappeared with flash of white into the closing azure.

For every day now, through the long wealth of weather, the man came down into the quiet cove and laying aside all garments of his kind he gave himself in trusting nakedness into the rich appreciation of his love, the lake. And how blissfully was he received! There is no bodily repose so sweet as that given to a perfect swimmer as he lies floating in this denser space, no weight coming unequally to any portion of the body; all relaxation, all rest, or gentle, even and voluptuous motion to propel, if one desires a change. And to the man the delight was increased by the keen artistic sense of the beauty of his own body. After swimming lustily for a time, till he was well into the arms of the deep, oft would he turn upon his back and lengthening his arms above his head, inflate his rising breast and lie glancing down his ivory length to watch the graceful, pulsing, living members as steadily, regularly, they bent and straightened in like time, to slowly move him on or keep him level in his rest. The blue waves were fond of him, too, for he constantly had their cool, wet kisses on his mouth

and eyes, and they moved softly to and fro with gentle caressing motion over his beauteous chest, or deepened with dimpling swirl over his life and loins, working through curious charm of sunlight all over his glinting manhood the delicate striæ seen in ivory, and making the man seem to his already enchanted gaze, that he of the fair, white body was now a godlike being, no longer a creature of flesh with unchaste longings of the blood.

Then he would lift his eyes to the sky and his soul would be worthy of the body. How the widening beauty would flow out from him, the white mingling with the blue. Perhaps some fleecy clouds were sailing; then how the flowing whiteness would catch them joyous in, and go on stronger for the food. Perhaps in levelling his gaze along the surface of the water it would pierce the blue to the shimmering snow tops of the mountains, and then would revel there. At last, when the man's soul was filled to bursting, he would turn once more his face and bosom to the warming water, and seizing it strongly in his arms he would cleave the blue denseness of it like the wind and shout with joy as he felt the quiver of electric currents

that flowed out from his panting limbs into the phosphorescence of the beaded wake. When wearied by this, and returned once more to his natural self, he would turn to the land again and his sandy beach and cove; or, perhaps, if the day were long before him, would set out on a journey of exploration mountainward, swimming as steadily as he walked, with long-drawn, even stroke, and the look of intent in his eyes.

Sometimes when he had left the water early in the day, he would enter again at sunset, and sporting in the rose-coloured translucence, would abandon himself to the ecstacy of colour; but this he did not often do, for he was some way afraid of himself afterwards lest in his joy he had done something beyond him. At one return when his abandon had been unusually excessive he found himself so fatigued and troubled that he could not sleep, and was compelled once more to leave his little room in the darkness and going to the secluded cove again to give himself, a third time for the day, into the loved arms of his lake. The water was most soothing in its motion; the stars shone comfortingly down; and after an hour of deep

silence he could return to his bed without tossing, though not to close his eyes till near the dawn.

This was the beginning of an intermittent restlessness that grew upon him with the weeks and seemed inexplicable to him now in the very consummation of his content. The landlady and her pretty daughter, together with the simple village folk, for now they had all learned to love this clear-eyed, sturdy, young northerner, often shook their heads as they watched him leave them and said the water was killing him; was drawing his life away. As they saw the restlessness increase and the lurking fire in the eyes more often to leap out, they even made so bold as to speak to the young man's face. They were always relieved, however, to find that he answered with a laugh and a hearty hand-clasp or embrace that reassured them once more that after all he was only human and not the spirit, ghostly being of the lake that their simple superstition had been whispering.

The passion grew and grew till it absorbed everything. There was to the man now but one thought; that was to feel the soft, warm clasp of the caressing water on his naked body,

to lie and watch his ivory length of living beauty turn and trail and change in the azure atmosphere upbearing him, to watch the white clouds steady in the heaven, or the veil of mist driving across the hills. Then when the evening light came on the rapture grew more intense. The man never missed the rose light now. It was as essential as his food to him. Sometimes as he floated, it almost seemed that he was dying, so easeful was the flow of life from him out into the principles of the universe. Then, just as he seemed sinking away into unconsciousness of colour, his love, the lake, would leap over his face with smothering kisses and warm him back to life. Then he would turn and take her in his arms and the tears gasping from his eyes would mingle with her waves.

Meanwhile the summer lengthened and grew till a tempest came from the mountains that spoke of winter imminent. For three days the lake was gray with wind and rain. The man sat in his room during this time and thought of all the world that had passed and tried to see the meaning of it. Fair, warm days followed and the lake was even more blue and more divine than ever, but the beauty carried

with it a sadness that made the man think long and somberly.

Every day he would swim out far into the mystery, for the air was more bracing now and he cared for longer distances; but as he dressed himself on the white beach in the cove he was every day more thoughtful. Gradually the indefinite took shape within him till he came to see a plan. Then, after another gray rain, he was fully determined: he would await the warmth once more, and that come, he would act. What could be better? Was there any good in life at all after one's happiness was completed? His plan was very simple. The next warm evening, when the rose light filled the universe, he would swim well out into the lake and sink. There would be a last floating in which to commend himself, then he would drop forever into the violet depths. "Perhaps," he fondly argued, "I shall not die at all; but be transformed direct into the glory of the air and water."

The day soon came. Balmy and southern was it, muffled in warmth and haze, the high clouds pendant overhead. After the morning plunge the man came out and sat in the shrubby grove looking over the expanse and thinking of

many things. At mid-day he returned to the village where he took his usual refreshment and late in the afternoon he lingered in idle talk with the villagers, talking to the men of work, to the children of play and to the women of sympathy. He left the village about four o'clock, "and naturally enough," the people said afterwards when they were speaking about it. He seemed only going out for the usual walk, and to be in the commonest of moods. They did speak of it afterwards and reviewed again and again the minutest particulars. They had loved more than they knew the shaggy young northerner and after that day they never saw him again.

In an hour's time the man was standing free from incumbrances on the wave-lapped strip of sand. He was as beautiful as ever before; slender, and graceful, and white, and now he would give himself finally to his love. It seemed his flesh was more ethereal to-day, it was semi-transparent, like the light shadowing through alabaster. After standing a moment in this perfection he walked down and lay his cheek on the bosom of the lake. Then steadily the wreathing arms shot out, the legs drew up and straightened in simultaneous precision and the

mountains seemed to draw nearer and nearer, while the sand-bordered cove was fading far behind.

The evening came on more glorious than ever before. Banners of draping rain fell floating from the zenith point, to crimson and glow in their motion, yet not to sweep the surface of the lake which lay like some great magic opal, the subtle fire playing and gleaming in its depths. Far off the mountains tinged with joyous sympathy and the great earth seemed to swing in its evolution to majestic music that, the man knew, could he but catch the strain of it, it would strike him stone dead.

Now he was floating in the chosen place, face upward, his eyes in the glory that was above, his thoughts sometimes below where he knew lay the conscious purple miles of his love that was awaiting him.

The ecstasy had come and the will was standing ready. At once the expanded breast shrank, the white limbs ceased their rhythmic beating motion and down went the body like a stone. Deeper and deeper grew the darkening purples to the eyes, a sense of rest complete was in the body. "Death was coming fast," said the man, "the lake was gently taking back her

own," when suddenly he felt that he was rising. Yes, when he opened his eyes he saw the light was growing. Steadily, steadily it came, till he was again on the surface, gasping, and the glorious sunset was above him.

He looked and breathed for a time without thought, save a vague hint of pain, then readying he closed his eyes and sank again. He had prepared better this time, and when his eyes opened he found the darkness had almost seized him. But this was not the warm, rich, love-smothering, dreamful death that he had anticipated. A horrible growing sense of oppression was on his breast and the steel cold of the water pressed a chill to his very marrow. His brain was dizzying and fire was flashing baleful before his throbbing eyes. "Was this then death?"

He thought of the miles of darkness below where he was going, then of the peace that was up. "Sweet Christ! Which way was up." He was lost, blind, helpless, alone; he was lost here in the stifling, crowding water. He knew it was the lake he loved, yet his joy rose wildly as he beat out hard and fierce with his arms against its embracing seizure.

Oh, how he hated the lake! He was swim-

ming now, but alas, if he only knew which way the light lay from him. Yet still he fought the cruel cold resistance and cursed and swam and raged and strained with all the demon, frenzied might that could find space enough to burn within his breathless body. Now that all was set against him, he swore that he would yet have the blessed light and air before he died. And in time it did come to him. But a glimmering fearful hope at first, he prayed till his very blood and flesh seemed turned to sickening bitterness; then, more surely, faint dawning on his greedy weariness; then growing rushingly upon him, till once more the opened eyes were measuring the red light of the heaven, the spasm-contracted breast was rising with the air, and the limp, white, panting body floated on the heaving, wind-swept lake.

The eyes closed soon. They did not longer care for sunset glory. The man was only thanking God he was alive, and praying that he be allowed to reach the land.

Well for him that he knew best how to use the little strength that he had left him, for the struggle underneath had worsted him more than miles of surface swimming could have

done. When he had breathed well he prepared to start, for he was chilling in the water and night would soon be coming.

Patiently, length by length, he recovered the distance, his eyes fixed ever on the crawling land. When his legs were dragging, when it seemed another stroke would tear his arms from shoulder sockets, when his breast creaked and groaned with the effort of its breathing, the man would turn on his back, and floating so, would pray for strength and the land.

How well he knew the marks of the approach! He noted them at every resting, remembered how they were at the last reckoning, and calculated how they would be at the next and the next that was to come—the angles of the nearest trees with the hills beyond, the point of the promontory to the north, and then the cottages upon it that measured off his rests.

"Now, I will swim even with the next," he was saying toward the end. "Now I am one-fourth of the way; now I am half; three-fourths; half of that; five more strokes. Oh, my arms are fixing in the joints! My curses on a body that is only beautiful! If I were but strong! If I had another breath of strength

how willingly would I be ugly, maimed, deformed even! Oh, if I can only reach the land! If I can tread it! Alas! If I can only sink and die on its dear firmness! I hate the lake! I hate the treacherous mists and their beauty! How they were dragging me down! How they have succeeded in my ruin!"

Then he would reflect that these violent thoughts were wasting his force, and he would calm himself and await the renewing strength for another stroke.

Slowly the land-marks were passed; more surely the man's strength was waning. Now he could see the details of the land, even could mark the spot where his clothes lay tossed upon the rock. Would he need them again? Was he sinking? Yes, he could not drag another muscle, though he died; and so near the land! Well, he had done his best. At all events he was dying bravely. No sentimental yielding up of life to love and nature here; he would curse them all for another minute of existence.

"Good-by land!" Sinking, sinking!

But what! His feet were touching! The sweet firmness was in the clasp of his toes, once more the muscles creaked, and by long pained

efforts he put one leg ahead of the other, and though the water sucked and dragged him back, it sank around his body. His shoulders, his waist, his middle, his knees were free from the snaky coils; and then he found himself stupidly lying on the sand and faintly wondering how long it was that he had been there. How blessed dry the sand! He must have been kissing it, for the grit was in his teeth. He was surprised to learn that his face was hot and dry, like that of a child who has been weeping.

In time, when he could, he rose up and put on his garments of the land. They hung about him flabbily. He was not beautiful now. No matter; nor did he once turn to look at his lake. No; when all was done he journeyed steadily away from it, and did not look behind. He knew the lake was there. He was always conscious of that. Still he walked on and on.

All through the warm night he travelled, now stopping long to sleep or rest, now rising and counting his paces. It was a strange journey, and the man tried to wonder why he made it. He could not; he had no thought at all. He felt his manliness forever broken. Still he walked on and away.

Then suddenly, just when the dawn was whitening the gray sky, when the flowers were lifting drowsily, and the birds were twittering in the trees—there, suddenly, it was, the mountains took him in and comforted him.

A Monochrome

A Monochrome

A YELLOW, dusty sky without a cloud—without anything, in fact, in all its continent save one small, garish, crawling disk from which to measure the wide emptiness and see it has no bound or change. In more blessed regions this disk is the sun, and very like 'tis called so here, so unimaginative and idle is the human faculty for giving names; but it is not the real sun—not that sparkling, comfortable face that we knew in childhood. This is but a round, dead glare of a sun, to say the best.

It appears every morning in much the same place that the true sun ought to rise, and then proceeds to drag itself slowly over the dead, green landscape of half parched grass and pines. Sometimes there are live oaks and cacti and agaves there with all the other sorts of thorned vegetation; but these are dead green, too, and have none of that freshness and crystal clearness that comes from dew and moisture in the leaves.

Half of the time, that is at night, when the yellow glare is gone and the blankness has given way to a mysterious and living purple, gemmed with a million dewy points, then it were possible for the soul of man to free itself and struggle toward the knowledge of the greater soul beyond; but no, it is not so here. At night, it is said, all honest, hard-working men should be in bed and sleeping, and surely the Latter-day Saints, the pious followers of the Book of Mormon, are all hard-working honest men. It is true that the women work often till far into the night, but this is inside, under a carefully shingled roof, in a box room filled with the glare of a kerosene lamp. Oh yes, the saints are progressive and have all the modern improvements, even in Mexico.

It is never spring in this gray-green valley; but yet it is never winter, nor summer, not autumn, either. There are times when the winds blow, when the rains fall, and again when the morning air is biting cold; but the oaks and the pines and the grass and the cacti still hold their gray-green foliage, and there is no decay, no death, though it seems that even death would be pleasure.

What is the human life in this compromise of glare and gloom?

Here is a modest, peaceful cottage with a woman sitting at work in the open doorway. Unseen, let us enter, and look, and listen.

I

"'TWAS a strange thing for Sam to be sayin' just when he drove off; a strange thing; and to say it in that sheepish way too! Sam, Sam!"

"Yes'm," replied a little tow-headed urchin of five, running in from the garden. "Yes'm."

"There, child, go and see where your sister Mary is. I wasn't callin' you. I was only thinking of your pa. Run play, run play."

"Yes'm," repeats the tow-head again, bobbing out into the light.

"I didn't think I was a-talkin' so loud," muses the mother, fondly, when her son is out of hearing. "I guess I must have been almost screamin'. Well, it was a strange thing for Sam to say. 'You know we may have to make room for another woman some day,' says he, an' sheepish like an' bothered, too."

Maggie Whipple again lays down her work and sits gazing steadily out into the yellow sunshine. The valley lies peaceful and quiet enough before her there, with the rolling hills

beyond sprinkled with slender pines that dim and fade away into the vagueness of the horizon. Cow bells are tinkling in the distance. It might be very beautiful, if one had not seen it always, just to sit in this dead peace and see and hear without effort.

But the woman has seen it always, at least for four years now; besides, she rarely if ever thinks of it at all. She is only a Mormon pioneer's wife, and like most Mormon women on the frontier, has little time to give to thinking of what she calls pretty things. Just now her thoughts are far from either beauty or ugliness in nature; but it is plain she is thinking of something, for her hands are clutching at the child's checkered gingham apron on which she has been sewing with greater force than is needed for such light material. Her sharp eyes seem trying to pierce the haze of the horizon.

She is only a large-framed, Swedish looking, Mormon woman; light hair combed plainly back; blue eyes always squinting as though from the intense light; sharp features, round shoulders, and heavy limbs—not a beautiful woman at twenty-four, and surely not one whose comeliness will improve with age.

"I've been a good wife to him, an' true," she

is murmuring. "But then, all the wives of our people are good an' true. We are more virtuous than the wives of any other people. An' yet the men want more than one! That's because the blessed Lord has commanded it in the revelation to Joseph the Prophet. 'Increase and multiply the earth,' says the Scripture. A good wife an' true—these six years now a-goin', an' he a good husband to me, too; but all husbands are good among our people.

"I've always someway thought that Sam would never want no one else but me. He never exactly said so except that first year when he was courtin' an' on the day when we was married. That was a happy day. We were back in Utah then, for then the enemy hadn't yet drove us to Mexico. Sam did look strong an' brave those days. Not but what he looks it now, only now he is slower an' fatter. I wore my white dress, an' flowers, an' we led the procession to the new church. An' then, comin' home after we had promised, when no one was looking, he put his arm around me an' said, lovin' like, 'Never any one but you for me, Maggie.' I think there was somethin' the matter with his voice, it shook so, but he only pretended it was a little cough, he was that man like.

"Well we've had four children since that; Sam an' Katie an' Mary an' Lizzie. And we come west too, an' give up our pretty home an' built this little house. Still, it's homelike here. I shall hate—I mean I don't believe makin' it larger would improve it much.

"What did he mean by talkin' that way about another woman? Why there comes Elder Rand! The Lord's will be done!"

II

"COME right in Elder. Never mind your feet, they're clean enough." She is offering him the rocking chair.

"Sam gone away?" inquires the Elder seating himself rheumatically. "Sorry; I wanted to see him, but if he's at the colony I can catch him as he drives home to-night. As it is I'll sit and talk a spell with you."

Now if the facts were known it would probably appear that the Elder had been aware that Sam would be away on this morning and had laid his plans accordingly. Indeed it is to be feared he had been informed of the absence by that gentleman himself earlier in the day as he drove by, and had even been requested to come to Maggie and break the news about the new marriage. However, we must not be too critical. We must remember that even falsehood may be forgiven when the culprit is an Elder, old and of long experience in doing good for others, and one who knows that women are a little "ticklish" about these things sometimes, and there is nothing like a little tact in coming at the matter in the right way.

The Elder is without doubt a good man, but for all that his appearance is not pleasing. His face, naturally thin and sharp, is puffed and scalded by the sun in a most disagreeable manner. His large, pale blue eyes seem starting from his head, and his front teeth, also large, appear to be impelled forward by a like determination. Between these two prominent features lies a long waste of face and nose very unsatisfactory in its boiled-lobster redness. He is a tall man, but slightly stooping. Though over seventy years of age, he still shows the strength of a man of fifty, and his last wife, the youngest of five, is a stout, comely brunette of some twenty-six years.

"Now I come to think of it, I'm glad Sam ain't at home," he is saying as he flourishes his red handkerchief about the back sides of his eyes. "I've got a little somethin' to say particular to you."

"Now you don't mean to be talkin' of another woman's comin' here with Sam an' me," smiled Maggie encouragingly.

"So you know, eh? Sam said he had hinted as much to you this morning, but he hadn't allowed that you'd take it different from a joke."

All this is in violent contradiction to previous

statements of ignorance of Sam's movements for the day, but the old man is surprised into it by the smiling content of the woman opposite him.

"Yet many of 'em take it in that way," he is reflecting. "They are true daughters of the church. We have good cause to feel proud of the women of our people, and of the men, too, for that matter. We alone have the perfect theory of the family."

"Oh yes," goes on the woman cheerfully. "I've been expectin' that Sam would bring me a sister. We used to talk of it often together a long time ago, but he hasn't said much lately. Who is she to be, now, if one might ask?"

"Sure you have a right to know that," chuckled the old man gleefully; for he is getting along with this troublesome task unusually well. "Why it's Jane Wright, from the colony. A good girl, Jane. An' she thinks a sight of Sam as you do, too, you know."

"I've always been a good wife an' true to him," speaks Maggie with the faintest tremble in her voice.

"Of course you have; of course," hurries on the old man, internally remarking that there never is any relying on these women. "Of

course, of course. Good an' true, an' so has he been, an' so will Jane be, an' a good sister to you an' a sight of company, an' you will both be a blessing in the sight of the Lord, for it is His will an' pleasure that you should be two happy sisters working in the vineyard of life together."

"An' His will be done," repeats Maggie piously.

"Then you will kiss her an' accept her in the church?" says the Elder authoritatively, though he gives the inflection of a question.

"When is it to be?" asks the woman interestedly, conscious that she is evading the question.

"Let's see! this is June, an' of course Sam must build. A snug little home you will have here, when he gets the other end of the house on. This has always looked unfinished as it is. Well, I should say some time about September, now. That will make a happy harvest for you all."

There is only silence for a response. The woman is sewing steadily on the child's checkered gingham apron.

"I'm glad that you are to be so happy; and now I must be gettin' back to my work. I'll

see Sam as he comes home. Good day, good day," and the Elder walks along, unusually spry, partly from fear that the woman may change, and partly because it is dawning upon him that he may have made a mistake in having mentioned seeing Sam that morning.

"Still, I think she didn't notice," he murmurs consolingly. "It was queer, the way she took it all, so smilin', an' then fired up about bein' good an' true. Well, you never can comprehend these women."

III

IN the house as soon as the door is closed —why should the door be closed on this warm June day?—the woman, Maggie, has gone directly to the bed and taken up the sleeping baby.

"This ain't Jane's, at any rate. My own little Lizzie! There, go back to sleep. You're wakin' early to-day. There, there! Lay up next my breast. There, don't cry. You've always got your ma. Always, an' I've got you."

She is getting somewhat hysterical, but fortunately there comes an interruption. Three tow-heads, aged five, three, and two come bobbing in the back door.

"Ma, I want a piece," shrills the eldest, very red and very freckled.

"Me too," says the next.

"An' me," chimes in the youngest.

"Well you do beat the Dutch," sighs the mother fondly. "Just like your pa, always hungry! I wonder if Jane's a good cook," this to herself. "I've heard it said her bread is black an' sour, but that was over a year ago.

Set down on the step," aloud again, "an' I'll get you all some bread an' butter."

It is a genuine comfort to cut the great white slices and spread them with firm yellow butter. Maggie does not put down the baby to do it. A Mormon woman gets so used to working with a baby in one arm that she seems to be the worse without it.

"There you are! Three pieces, and all the same size."

"But I'm the oldest an' ought to have the biggest," declares the manly Sam. "Besides, I'm a boy an' boys have more things 'n girls; pa says so; cause boys, you know, are goin' to be men some day."

"Just like his pa," thinks the mother again; and something seems to stop in her heart.

"Go out an' play now, an' let your ma do her work." The room is once more darkened. The baby is once more sleeping.

"I can't stand this heat of the house," breaks out Maggie, suddenly. "I will go to the mountain to look for some currants. I'll stop at the saw mill an' ask Sadie Henderson to come up an' mind the children."

A green gingham sunbonnet, a pair of mitts made from old stockings, are the only prepa-

rations. The woman is almost running through the glaring heat towards the saw mill which is only a little way down the stream.

"Because I don't want the children to stay long alone," she explains to Sadie in answer to inquiries concerning her breathless condition.

"But it's pretty late for currants, ain't it? Not but what I'll be willing to go. I'll be glad to get a little time for my crocheting, and I'm everlastingly pestered here, but it don't seem like there's much chance of your getting anything," she ended, doubtfully.

"Well, you know I need the change," replies Maggie. "I'll be back to get supper. Just help yourself for dinner, there's pies an' things in the cupboard. The children have just had a piece. No, I don't want nothin'," in answer to a questioning glance, "I eat a big breakfast."

She is running on now over the dam of the little river and toward the hills beyond. The fresh, green fields by the irrigating ditches offer her no comfort as she hurries past them. They, too, are suffering, struggling against this dead life, this gray-green waste that shuts them in and will not let them stretch out to meet the sympathies of their fellows. The woman, shuddering, feels their torture, but she hurries

on and does not give it name. Besides, there are men working in these fields. She runs at times when no one is in sight and soon she is alone.

The gray-green hills have taken her in their arms. They can at least shield if they cannot comfort her.

IV

THE sun is low in the west when Maggie Whipple returns. Her face is burned and stained with dust and something like the green of grass. Her shoes are cut and torn from striking against the stones; her skirts, too, have rents enough for a half day's mending.

"Wherever have you been?" exclaims the astonished Sadie. "Here's Mrs. Jenney just come down from the upper farm. You'd better go and bathe your face. It's that stained I wouldn't know you. Wherever did you get that grass stain on your forehead?"

"Well I must be going home, now," when only a nervous laugh is the response. "If pa don't have his supper on the minute he just goes into a fit."

"How de do! Mrs. Jenney," says Maggie, pleasantly, coming in after a two minutes' toilet at the washstand outside the back door. "I've just been in the hills after currants, but I didn't find much. Seems to be a barren year. You've heard from the Elder about the wedding we're

to have at our house, and come to congratulate us, I reckon."

"Why yes, partly that," replies the old woman eyeing Maggie narrowly. "We are all glad, for we know that you will find it a great comfort to have so nice a girl as Jane come to help you take care o' Sam an' the children; yet I 'spose, as for children, she'll soon be havin' plenty of her own."

Mrs. Jenney is an old woman, very black and wrinkled and also very sly about the eyes. She has always been an only wife, and there is some talk that it has been her managing that she has remained so; but this is doubtless gossip, for she has been often called by the Elder a true daughter of the church.

"Well, Sam is a good provider," says Maggie proudly.

"Yes, an' marriage is a good thing for a man. A man needs love, now, more than a woman. He needs comfort an' advice, an' what one wife can't give another can. It's the true state, is marriage. An' I never could understand the reason of our enemies when they make such laws as drives us from our own country where they don't talk this bothersome Spanish and where they use American money.

The money here is a poor excuse. A dollar is worth all sorts of prices from seventy-five to ninety cents, which is owin' to the cheap kind of silver they make it of, I reckon, for they do say it weighs as much as American money. Yes, wedlock is a holy state; an' the more wives the holier it is. Why now, how many wives do you s'pose God has?"

"I s'pose they're angels," ventures Maggie doubtfully; for Mrs. Jenney is authority on religion and has seen miracles performed for protecting her people.

"No; they're women," is the firm rejoinder. "Real wives, an' He has thousands an' thousands. There's no law against Him. An' the law don't work much against us neither, not even up there in the states; the men can marry spiritually. Why, right in the face of the law I married my son, who is dead now twenty years, to a girl in the old country, an' she never knows it neither. There will be great joy for her when she gets to glory, to find so good a husband as my son was. For he was a good husband, always.

"The Elder says you'll be building now on to your house," as Maggie went on about the work. "I hope you're happy an' resigned to

the Lord's will. Jane is a good girl, they say. I never saw much of her at home, only at the services an' the society. I don't wonder Sam's in love with her, for she's right pretty and young, too, a good bit younger than you, I should say. The young fellows all seem to be hangin' around her, but she shows her good sense in takin' Sam. You're happy I s'pose?" this with a sharp look from the sly eyes.

"Whatever makes Sam happy makes me so too," answers Maggie steadily. "I think Jane an' me will love each other like true sisters; I shall always love anybody that is good to Sam. Here comes them children for somethin' more to eat."

Mrs. Jenney at last takes her sly eyes away, praising the policy of the church and the unity of the Latter-day Saints, as she departs.

"It will soon be time for Sam to be comin' in," thinks Maggie, wearily. "That's goin' to be the hardest time of all," but she does not say this aloud, even though she is alone in the house.

V

SAM WHIPPLE is a lazy, burly fellow with honest blue eyes and a hairy, sandy face. He comes home late to-night and seems to spend unusual time caring for the horses and doing the "chores" about the farm. Perhaps that is because of the darkness. Whatever may be the reason the children are all in bed and asleep when he announces himself at the door by asking if supper is ready. Then there is a big demonstration of washing of hands, but finally the two sit face to face and Sam is softly asking the Lord's blessing on their humble meal.

They begin in silence. Sam is waiting for Maggie to say something about the visit of the Elder, but Maggie is determined to let her husband open the question without assistance from her. Little things of the day's work creep weakly enough into the conversation. At last Sam can stand it no longer.

"Ain't you goin' to take anything but that cup o' tea?" surlily.

"I was hungry and ate with the children."

"Oh! I s'pose the Elder was here to-day?"

"Yes, he said he expected to see you, but you wasn't at home."

"Oh! well—I s'pose he pointed out the path of duty for us both in this case of, of takin' one who needs our help."

"There wasn't any call for him to point out mine."

Sam is getting alarmed.

"I don't s'pose you will be for goin' against the will of the Lord as it has been made manifest to us through Joseph the Prophet?"

"I shall not be for goin' against what you want to make you happy."

"Oh."

The woman is softening now, and her harsh voice is almost deep and tender. "I've been a good wife and true," she says steadily, but with quivering lips.

"Yes, all the wives are good and true with our people. That is due to our system. The men appreciate this more than the women. There is not a man among the Latter-day Saints but what cares more for his home than any Gentile does."

"I believe I forgot to shut the chicken house

door," exclaims Maggie rising suddenly. "I'll go and see to it now," and she hurries out into the darkness.

"Easier job than I was lookin' for," remarked Sam to himself, smiling uneasily. He sits a long time waiting and thinking of many things. Of their early courting days first, then afterwards of Jane, but he has been thinking of her all day and soon he is dozing. He feels that it is time to go to bed and still Maggie has not come. He goes to the door and listens.

"Maggie," he calls, "Maggie."

"I wonder where she went. There's no seein' nothin' in this darkness. I reckon she'll come around all right. Don't like it much, I s'pose; still, she seemed to take it uncommon easy. Well, there's no prophesyin' about the actin' of women," and he creeps off to bed and in five minutes is sleeping soundly.

Outside, a half mile away, a woman is running aimless in the night. Often she will stop and look up at the stars, often she will throw herself on the ground and sob and pray like a little child.

"O, God," she is saying, "help me to do Thy will! God make me good, only good! Let me not think of myself! Make me a good wife

an' true! Lord God bless him and her, and make us two sisters together! I know it is Thy desire. Help me to be Thy obedient servant."

It is several hours later when she steals quietly into the house. The lamp is burning low, for the oil is almost spent. Her husband's steady breathing shows him to be sound asleep.

"I will not do the dishes to-night. It might wake Sam. I will get up early in the morning. I have been won over to the Lord's side. His will be done!"

Alas, the struggle has but begun.

VI

THE day is Sunday, and all the village of Pacheco is risen early in order to prepare itself for "service." In all the houses children are being washed and boots are being blackened. The men are encasing themselves in stiff white shirts and hot woolen trousers. The women are brushing their shiny, ill-fitting "best dresses" and sticking some bit of ribbon or faded bunch of artificial flowers in their hair. What sight is more pitiful than a plain, careworn face trying to play holiday under a wisp of straw-colored hair decked with a bunch of cheap bedraggled artificial flowers? The children are scarcely more pleasing than the women. Why do all Mormon children look alike? It is not so in other communities, even among the lowest classes. Go where you like, you will always see elsewhere than this some shock-headed, frightened-eyed sprite, that has all the genius of conscious motion. But it is not so among the Mormons. White hair, carefully parted now and combed back wet and

shiny; freckled faces, now red with the recent scrubbing; pug noses, sturdy limbs, and pink calico dresses. Pink calico is the Mormon child's Sunday attire. That of week days is blue-and-white gingham check.

Sam and Maggie set out at half-past eight as usual, though to them it is not the same as usual at all. And yet a neighbor would not notice any change. There is Sam walking a little way ahead, carrying the baby on one arm and leading Lizzie with the free hand. Behind comes Maggie with little Sam and Mary, carrying the Bibles, hymn books and Book of Mormon, and trying to keep her best hat from the clutches of the wind. They enter the dusty little school room just as the Elder is rising to announce the hymn, and are obliged to walk up front close to the organ in order to find a vacant seat.

Mormon worshippers come early and come regularly.

The congregation is singing the second stanza of "Zion's Wall" when Maggie looks up from the cares of settling the children and sees something that makes her heart leap to her throat and stop there, aching and quivering. It is nothing but the expression on Sam's face—

a simpering expression, a stranger might say; but to Maggie it means the tenderness, the strength and devotion of a manly heart—the heart she loves. Never has she seen that look save when it has been turned towards her in the years of their courtship and early marriage. Now the look is directed across and in front of her to the other side of the room. Swift as a flash the woman's glance has followed it and struck the sentimental smile of Jane Wright, but Jane is looking at Sam and does not see. Maggie turns on the blissful man almost fiercely and takes the baby from his arms. It was irresistible, that sudden impulse of hers to make him feel her presence, which he evidently had forgotten. Once when it is done it is regretted, but to make some appearance of reason the wife sits down and puts the secured baby to her breast. Here among these simple folk it is an act of becoming dignity, even during "service" for a mother to nurse her child.

When the organ has ceased its clamor and the last echoes of "Zion's Wall" have died away; when the cheap, tired-looking young men and women who make up the choir are seated and the Elder's voice is lifted high in prayer, Maggie Whipple is still looking down

fiercely at her child, and saying only under her breath, "It is my own, my very own!"

The long, droning service that has often been so sweet in her ears, as after some period of sickness, grief or lonesomeness, to-day is but meaningless sounds. The sacrament of bread and water is taken, the sermon is delivered and the singing and collection ended. "It is half done." It is all that Maggie Whipple is thinking.

Then comes the Sunday School; more singing, more talking, more taking of the sacrament. The classes are formed in various sections and corners of the room. Maggie is taking her place in the married woman's class, and she imagines her sisters are looking at her curiously. She remembers how she looked curiously on sister Clarissa Anderson whose husband took a second wife not long ago. She smiles and speaks to everybody, though she has seen by a side glance that Sam is, as usual, teaching the young ladies' class and Jane Wright is one of the scholars.

When at last they are dismissed, and the noise of the moving and conversation has begun, Maggie stands amidst the sleepy children

tying on their hats and arranging their garments listlessly. In reality she is waiting for Sam who is over by the door talking to Jane Wright. Maggie sees his awkward advances, that the Mormons are wont to speak of as "sparkin'," yet she keeps herself busied with the children and seems not to see.

Sam is evidently not thinking of her at all. He is smiling—and, yes, he is going out with Jane. As his broad shoulders disappear through the doorway a wild curse is rising from the breast of his forsaken wife and burning like fire in her mouth. The manifestation on the lips, however, is an unusually sweet smile, for sister Clarissa Anderson is taking the two older children by the hand and saying "Are you going home now, Maggie? I go your way as far as uncle Rand's."

This Sunday Maggie takes her dinner alone with the children. She has been alone often before, but never alone like this. She is only thinking dully that she must get used to it now.

Later, when the children are playing quietly outside, she sits in a corner of the room and is thinking of her mother at her old home—her home of long ago, in a pretty house with her

mother and sisters, but where her father rarely came. She wonders if her mother always felt as she is feeling now.

Often she ceases wondering and reviews over again and again all that happened at the "service." When she comes to look on Sam's face and the last view of his shoulders going out the door the bitterness that fills her soul is worthy to be a devil's hate, but her lips do not utter a sound.

It is only late in the evening when Sam has returned and is asleep again in bed and she is out under the stars that she prays that the Lord's will be done, and that they three may make a happy family.

Once more she comes in praising God that she has conquered Satan; but there is to come a morrow.

VII

AS soon as the field work will permit, Sam begins the new addition to the house.

"I intend that you shall not be disturbed," he says kindly to Maggie one day, for he feels that he ought to be kind to her even if she does take his marrying a second time so calmly. Moreover the Elder has been giving him a good lecture concerning his conduct toward her.

"Now some men here are willin' to take two wives into the same room, but that ain't my style. I know you women like to be by yourselves, don't ye now?"

"It would be much better for *her,* I should think, since I have all the four children," hazards Maggie timidly.

"Just what I was thinkin'," says Sam brightly. "But you will like to have the same livin' room won't ye now? I haven't the money to build two separate houses, you know. She has agreed to this, an' so it's decided if you say so. We'll have it like the Cook's an' the Johnson's you know—another log house like this for the other end, and the frame livin' room

between the two. Then we can all eat together —for you will like to eat with me, as we always have done, won't you? Though each one of you will have your private sittin' room."

"It would seem better wouldn't it, if there was two separate houses, one for her, an' one for me. My mother, now, always had her own house," ventures Maggie again.

"No, I can't afford that. We ain't in Utah, remember, but Mexico, an' Jane an' I ain't willin' to wait till this year's crop is sold. We feel the Lord speakin' to us and we must all stand faithful an' obedient. Besides if she's willin' to live with you, I should think you might be to live with her, especially when she ain't got no children to bother."

"Very well, then," replies Maggie going about her work; but her heart is like lead.

As for Sam, he is cross-grained this morning and must be forgiven. He has just reason for complaint, perhaps, for it is plain to see that Maggie takes little interest in his new bride. He is on the very point of following up this listless answer of his wife with some stinging remark when he fortunately remembers the Elder's advice and holds his peace.

"I s'pose I ought to kiss her sometimes," he

says to himself. "I'll be wantin' to kiss Jane now an' then, an' Maggie will be liable to see, an' fly off I s'pose. She never has flew off, though. Well, women are curious critters. One would a' thought that Maggie loves me more than what she shows. I wonder if Jane will ever be the same way. Women are different from us men, now. Our affections don't show off so much, but once set, they never change."

The new house goes up rapidly enough, for Sam is unusually in earnest about this work. Moreover Jane's brothers come over often to help with the logs and heavier work. Maggie has not time for brooding with all her work in the kitchen, cooking for so many men.

Sometimes through the open window she hears the messages sent by these brothers from Jane, and without saying anything to her husband she knows that the "things," as the trousseau is called, are getting on as well as can be expected.

"Now Maggie would be glad to go over an' help," she hears Sam say one day, "but you know there's all the work with the new house to keep her here."

As a matter of fact Maggie does not feel like offering to help just then, but prayer is mighty

and the next morning, after a wild night, she is saying calmly enough, " Sam if I could get off I should like to go over an' help *her* with her things, but you know there's no one else to cook for you men an' mind the children. I expect she understands how it is."

" You are a little late about makin' the offer, but I'll tell her the next time I'm over," says Sam lightly." " Guess I'd better go over to-night," he adds as if it had just occurred to him. " I reckon you can do the milkin' an' feed the horses hay."

" Oh yes," returns Maggie patiently. " Just as well as not. Of course while I willin'ly offer to come, she mustn't expect me to do it you know."

" She might come up with the boys an' spend the day with you," suggests Sam wistfully.

" Not at all," replies Maggie quickly, " 'cause then her work would get farther behind than ever, an' she couldn't do me no good."

Thus the work goes on and the two women do not exchange visits.

The house is done, at length, and the furniture is being put in.

" It will be a sight nicer for you to get your

kitchen out of the room an' in the new livin' room," says Mrs. Jenney, prying about one day with her sly eyes. "Well, you are well fixed Maggie; you surely ought to be a happy woman."

"The Lord has been very bounteous to me," repeats Maggie piously.

"He is always good to His chosen people," chimes in the old lady. "Many an' many is the miracle He's worked for us Latter-day Saints."

"Lord God work a miracle in me!" groans Maggie that night under the silence of the stars. "Help me to bow to Thy commands!"

VIII.

THE Sunday wedding is safely over and the Whipple family is walking homeward from the little school-house in triple conjugal happiness.

There are to be no festivities. "Nobody wants to leave off with the crops to fuss over gettin' ready for a weddin'," Sam has said. "Here even I can't afford to miss a day, behind as I am with my buildin' an' courtin'."

Maggie hurries about with the dinner as soon as they have reached the house, while Jane and Sam go into the new room adjoining. They close the door behind them and Maggie tramps heavily to let them understand she is not listening. Once, when she is spreading the cloth she thinks she hears the sound of a kiss and she breaks out suddenly into a loud singing which is not at all pretty, for Maggie has neither voice nor tune, even when at her best.

They come out after some time looking a little uneasy, both of them, but Maggie is quite herself, only perhaps just a little merry and

talkative. She tells Jane all about the place and plans the work they will have to do.

"We might all three go about an' look at the farm," suggests Sam anxiously.

"You an' Jane will go. I must stay an' put up my pickles," says Maggie decisively. "That watermelon rind has been standing so long' 'twill spoil if it ain't put in pickle to-day."

"You oughtn't to work on Sunday, really," hesitates Sam. "But it would be a shame to lose the pickles," he adds briskly.

And so it is arranged; and as they leave the house, the fiend is in the lonely woman's heart again.

As the sun drags itself down across the white sky Maggie works with her pickles and reviews again the ceremonies of the day. She thinks at times that the Lord has really given her of His strength. Certainly she has borne up well in the church. She had smiled beautifully when she kissed Jane. Surely no one could know all that she knew.

It is only when she sees them together thinking of each other and forgetting her that her passion rises and conquers. She therefore determines to run away where she cannot see them.

"I've got to go over to the Allen's to-night an' see about buyin' some fruit jars of them," she announces at supper. "Don't set up till I come back if I am late."

Both Sam and Jane look relieved, though Sam says something about waiting just as well till morning.

Maggie is late in coming back, very late even for her. Surely she has not stayed at the Allen's so long. When she slips into her own part of the house the light is out in Jane's room.

This night Maggie Whipple lies down in her bed alone, but not to sleep, however tired she may be, nor yet to thank the Lord that He has strengthened her. It is doubtful, even, whether now she is asking for His strength.

IX

WHEN the gray dawn spreads over the east, this woman slips from her prison room and faces the cool, damp light. She hates the thought of the room behind; the room that holds her children and that used to be her home. She wishes that it might burn down if the children were but safe and so cease to torture her. Her thoughts go back to the long hours of the night, for now her rage is spent and she can think reflectively. The great trouble seemed to be the children, for she had been in constant fear lest she should waken them. It all seems like the passion of another person that she has been witnessing. How odd it was that when a thought of the children had made that woman quiet, suddenly a fancy of the two in the other room would throw her into a spasm of silent, tearless agony that she thought only a devil could feel.

Just now, she, Maggie Whipple, is feeling very tired and very old. She wonders if she will live much longer. Then her thoughts have

strayed to yesterday and she is thinking of some light joke or answer that she has given at her husband's wedding. She smiled then. She wonders if she can smile now. Oh, yes, she can do it easily; it even seems to deceive the clutching pain in her breast. She will smile all the time. The sun is rising, it is time she was preparing the breakfast, Jane will probably not get up very early.

She enters the house, but hastens through the room of torture into the new living room that they are to share in common. Here are her duties now. She bustles about starting the fire and kneading out the bread. At first she tries to keep still in order not to waken the couple in the next room. Then she thinks they may hear her creeping about and think she is listening, and she sings a hymn. When the preparations for breakfast are well under way she goes out to feed the pigs and chickens, and while watching the chickens eat she sits down in a warm corner by the straw stack and falls to thinking again.

Meanwhile Sam from Jane's part of the house has heard her go out and thinks it a good time to make his appearance. Jane has just helped him with his coat and hat in so wife-like a way

that he feels kindly towards all the world, and especially so toward Maggie. Still, he is glad that he shall not meet her as he steps out of the room. He hastens to find the milk pail and walks toward the barn. There everything is commonplace, and they can talk of the work as they used to do.

Hurrying around the corner of the strawstack he almost stumbles over the body of his first wife who is sitting with her hands clasping her knees. She looks so worn and sad that his heart is softened still more and in righting himself he lets his hand rest awkwardly on her clasped ones.

That burly caress was a mistake, for at once his big sensible wife has thrown her arms about his knees and is bathing his feet with her tears. Her strong, rounded shoulders are heaving with great sobs but she is not uttering a sound.

At first this is almost gratifying to the husband, but soon it becomes embarrassing, as there seems to be no end. What if Jane should come! How Maggie will look at breakfast after all this crying! He attempts to take away her arms, but she only holds him the tighter and cries the harder. He waits a little longer and then says gruffly, but not unkindly: "There

now, stop blubberin'. I ain't left ye. I'm your husband as much as ever."

She does not leave off her hold nor her weeping.

Sam then takes hold of her arms more firmly and tries to unclasp them. She fights like a wild animal. His temper is rising.

"Don't be a fool," he says, with a hard ring of hate in his voice; he says it too with an oath. Still she does not let him go. He breaks away kicking with his heavy boots and thrusting with his arms. An onlooker would say he were beating her but he tells himself he is only using necessary force to push her off. He frees himself and goes about his milking, leaving her lying flat in the straw, sobbing and shrieking like a child.

X

THE breakfast is a little late on this first morning. When Sam comes in from the barn some two hours later he finds Jane setting the table and Maggie washing the children's faces. The two women seem to be getting on well together. Maggie is a little red about the eyes and has a shame-faced manner, but she is doing her best to be agreeable to Jane. Strangely enough Sam is the one who is sullen and moody. The women talk of the children, the sewing, the garden, everything; but he eats in silence.

"If Maggie was in earnest about her blubberin' why does she get over it so soon?" he is thinking.

The day moves on, perhaps dragging a little for the newly wedded. Still there is work to do and much is accomplished. The women have a few callers in the afternoon. Old mother Jenney is here with her prying eyes, but even she does not see a movement that can be taken as a sign of jealousy.

"We have the happiest wives among our people of any wives in the world," she says as she takes her prying eyes away with her.

In the evening the Elder drops in and tells long stories till Maggie is nodding. When he goes away he asks Sam to walk a "piece" with him, and perhaps he gives some Elderly advice out there in the darkness. It is very likely, for when Sam comes back to the newly wakened women he says to Maggie sullenly:

"If you've put the young ones in the bed, pile them on the floor as usual. I shall not want them kickin' me in the night." Then as he goes with Jane into her room to show her about the lamp, he says, he adds to Maggie, "Go on to bed, I'll be in in a minute."

It is probable that the Elder did not advise this prolonged good-night with the new wife, "but then," reasons Sam quietly, "he did not know about the lamp." It does not occur to him that his affairs are none of the Elder's business. That is not a feeling of the Latter-day Saint.

"Not asleep yet?" he says to Maggie as he crawls into bed by her side some half an hour later. "Well, you must be tired out. Now

Jane is here you won't have to work so hard with the cookin' an' the kids. She says she'll do most of the house work an' help you with the sewin'."

XI

"I S'POSE if I should plow out the potatoes you women could pick them up now?" says Sam at breakfast.

"Yes, it's time they were in, for the grubs are workin' on 'em," replies Maggie.

"We'll be out by the time you are ready, I guess," adds Jane to show her willingness to help.

The dishes are washed, the table pushed back against the wall, the floors are swept and everything is put in order. A Mormon house is always orderly.

Sam has turned out the potatoes and they lie in long rows on the fresh, brown ridges as the plow has left them.

The women walk along the furrows with baskets and pick up while Sam carries to the wheelbarrow. It is hard work, but they are used to it and none of them think much about aching backs.

Maggie has always done this work before; every year since she was married. Always before she has been used to think of the yield,

of what they will buy with the money from the store and she has then gone on to wonder how the little fellow Sam will look when he is big enough to pick up potatoes. To-day she is thinking that this work will have to be done again and again, one year after another. She wonders how long she will live; probably thirty-five years yet, or forty, or forty-five. It seems a long time to wait. And then, what is there to wait for at the end! Mrs. Jenney says there are marriages in heaven.

"I wonder which one of us three will die first," she keeps thinking to herself. "Sam will, maybe. I think Jane an' I could get on well together then. Or Jane first, maybe. But Sam and I would never be the same again, even if she should die now. Or, maybe me!" Here her passions rise up too violent for words.

Then Sam calls out to see if she has fed the baby, and as she goes to get the child she prays silently that they two may live happily together and be kind to her children if she is taken. She would like to kneel and pray, but she is not alone. She can never be alone again now,—always some one near,—work, work and smile.

The baby goes to sleep and is put to bed in the shade of the barrels. Once more the pota-

toes are going steadily into the baskets. There seem to be countless numbers of potatoes, as there are of days that are to come. The two are much alike. Each begins with the same motion as its fellow preceding, goes in the same direction and ends in the same way. The only difference is, a potato is soon passed, but a day has many hours made up of many minutes.

Jane, too, seems to feel the heaviness of it all, for even when Sam speaks to her she does not liven up. Perhaps she will live fifty years. What a long time to look forward to.

At last it is time for dinner, and Sam says the women shall not work in the afternoon. It was not so last year, and will not be so next, thinks Maggie, but it is no more than right to make things easy for a two days' old bride. They go into the house talking of the harvest and the prospects for crops in the coming year. They eat, and the women wash the dishes again, just as they did in the morning and just as they will always do three times a day for fifty years.

They sew in the afternoon and get supper and wash the dishes once more. Then they sit about till they grow sleepy, each one watching the other guardedly and both watching Sam.

Of course all pretend not to be watching; they will always pretend not to care.

Again the day is done and Maggie is gone to her lonely room. One day is gone, but there are fifty years more of them to follow; fifty years, and three hundred and sixty-five days in each year!

Let us get away from this gray-green valley before we go raving mad. Yet even though we are away we still know that it is there, as dead and as live as ever. The sun will rise and drag itself across the blank sky and set at last, to rise again on the morrow. We can see it always when we look towards it, but we will not look longer; we will turn and run away from it. Thank Heaven that we can! Thank Heaven that some of us are men.

As for the woman, Maggie Whipple—and there are thousands of them like her, thousands who are not Latter-day Saints—she cannot run away. She must stay and work and live it out, even to the dreary end; never to rest, never to be alone. But she will not go mad, as we think we should do. Is she then our superior there? Perhaps it is so. At least she will not

go mad. Swedish women with heavy rounded shoulders and vulgar, hulking ways, with coarse, hard hands, and arms that ache with the constant weight of children—these women do not go mad. They work and grow dull and stupid instead.

I know that there are times, scores of times perhaps, in every dragging day, that this one thinks the madness is coming, and that she curses and prays and struggles with herself, but it does not come for all that. She works instead, and she smiles too, changing at times, wistfully, stolidly, almost hopefully for a moment, but steadily always. She would not smile were it not that she has schooled herself to it, because she is never alone. After all 'tis not so hard a thing, this screening a cursing, dying heart with a hopeful smile. 'Tis done oftentimes outside the still valley; but there it is always done.

Then, too, in the most desolate lives there are hopeful times. At intervals the dusty yellow sunlight livens up the grayness in the green, and almost gives a promise of a better day. Be sure that during a vigorous walk in the open air even the most round-shouldered and the coarsest of these Swedish women will

feel a yearning possibility that all may yet be well; that she may come to look upon the companionship of her sisters with her husband as a source of greatest joy. Then it is that she will pray most tearfully—"Thy will, O, Lord, be done!" Sometimes it will seem that her prayers are answered, and she will make to kiss her sister's child, her husband's child as well; but the curious stare of the other woman, her sister, who is not now praying, or the pettish sullenness of her husband will bring the old life back again, and no longer is she alone, but is working on drudgingly as before, telling off the minutes till the sun shall have dragged itself over the day's awaited hours, and the fearful night of suspense and pain and weariness is begun.

Thank God there is weariness to comfort her! Blessed be that patient, heavy labor that will spread itself through all the frames of those women, till it has soddened and numbed all that is delicate and sensitive of fibre. Soddening though it is, it gives sleep; and when that comes, then, at least, there is nothing worse than dreams to think of. When it does not come—no; but it must come; we will think it comes, though we know that it often does not.

We *must* think it comes, because our sympathies cannot endure the agony else. As for the woman's endurance, well, we have said it many times; she is only a heavy, round-shouldered Swedish woman, and if she does not like it, why was she born there? She might try to get away, if she liked. She could not do it, but we can say that she might try, just to quiet our sympathies.

But the woman fighting and smiling there and never alone is looking homeward and heavenward toward the promises of Joseph the Prophet.

"Surely," she is saying, "God is Good. I suffer because of my sin. When my rebellious spirit is conquered I shall be content. Behold His eternal justice! Some day He will give me peace."

And some day we feel He will; that is, if our faith is strong in no future after death. Perhaps, even, when she is very old, if the suffering of her daughters is from her sight, she will find a dozing, drowsy peace here in the gray-green valley. Until then let the sun drag there as it will.

The History of a Paradox

The History of a Paradox

HE was not strong even from the day of his birth.

"A worthless child," his father used to say; and then, as is usual in such cases, the father and mother joined all care and forces to keep this worthless one alive, leaving his heartier brothers and sisters to shift as they might.

It was something of reward, doubtless, that he was beautiful; large dark eyes lit with dreams and fire; high brow, and languid silken curls as white as milk when it comes foaming in the pail.

The hair darkened as the child grew older. The mother died, of weariness perhaps; but in an old trunk even this very day there lies wrapped in a piece of newspaper, crumpled and yellow with ancient handling, one of those milk-white curls just as it came from the baby's head on that woeful day of the first hair-cutting. There it lies in the crumpled paper, glowing and twining still like a living thing, and whether it is its beauty or whether it is some-

thing else I do not know, but many times as hands have caressed it in the past, tears have fallen upon the paper, and if the world is not becoming hardened in this critical and scientific day, it shall be, please God, that the tears will fall again.

The mother died, and afterward the boy used to sit on his father's knee, forgetting soon all memories of a softer lap and to call for his favorite songs as the firelight leaped around them. Then the father sang out loud and lustily. It was the way of this man to sing out cheerily and long, and never allow the hardening lump in his throat to rise and strangle the melody.

The boy loved his father, but he feared him too—as a man always must be feared—and he used to weep at the slightest sign of disapproval. There was a sister, however, who had become the little mother now, and though he loved her quite as much, he used often with her to break out into violent fits of rage and rebellion.

One morning—it is here our history really begins—when he had been worse than ever before, it seemed, the sister was called away for the day. She tried to kiss him good-by at

parting, but he kicked and struck like a madman. That was until his sister was gone. Then self-reproach overwhelmed him. He ran and ran after the departing carriage, screaming for his dear sister to stop, to come back and forgive him, but they did not hear; the dust rose and choked him, he fell rigid with spasms of grief, but no one came to lift him. When he could walk again he returned slowly to the house, screaming as he went and sat down in a sunny spot, vowing that he would cry there until night and let his sister find him. His brothers came for query and comfort, but they only increased his agitation. He threw all playthings from him and piled the gravel of the walk upon his head.

"I will cry always," he said, "until my sister comes to forgive me. It will be a long, long day, but I am strong inside and I can do it."

Then he cried one hour, two hours, without ceasing, and wondered why he could not cry so easily as he had done in the beginning. His brothers had left him long ago and taken away their sympathy. Enraged at them for their neglect, he cried with renewed force for a time and stopped to listen if they were coming.

Once the chickens gathered about him; he tried to cry with one eye and watch them with the other. Then the cat came to bask and roll in the sun. Still he cried faintly with occasional tearing sobs. Then the cat chased the chickens; then a bird came down to scratch for worms. He was hungry, too, and ate some bread his brother had left for him. There were so many things inviting him out into the warm meadow. He was crying with vexation now, because he could not cry any longer. Along came the old dog, at last, and the temptation was too great to be resisted; away both went for a ramble. When night came and the sister returned the boy was laughing merrily.

Then the thought came to him that he was not crying, and much ashamed by it he went off alone to think.

"I thought I was strong inside," he said, over and over again, "but the birds and the meadow were stronger."

He never forgot this day so long as he lived, and with it ends the first chapter—much the same as all the rest, we fear, will find themselves to be ending.

II

THERE was a field back of the orchard where the boy used to go to work when he reached the age of usefulness.

"You may hoe among the potatoes to-day," the father might say, and the boy would set off eagerly. The birds were singing. The cool morning air was freshening in the shortened curls. The boy was singing too, and his step was bounding.

"I will do twelve rows to-day," he would say to himself, "and then how proud and surprised father will be."

Before he began his first row he would stop for a minute to greet the valley. The field lay in a smaller valley half way up the slope, so he could look down and out, as if it were to a picture. There wound the river with its trellised screen of trees. The blue haze hung over it. Beyond were the hills with checkered farms and woods. Cottages were there, peaceful as his own home. Above was the sky, fleece-clouded, blue and wonderful.

"All, hail, valley!" shouted the boy stretch-

ing his arms out toward it. "Hail! Hail!" and then deep waves of sympathetic mystery would rise within him and make him to uncover there his head and wait for silent benediction. The tears falling from his wide distended eyes would fall upon his blouse, and, searching for his handkerchief, he would see the hoe long since fallen and forgotten. Then he would think of the twelve rows.

In picking up the hoe he saw perhaps that the handle so carelessly let fall had crushed one of the tender vines.

"Poor little thing," said the boy. "Your back is almost broken and I have been to blame."

Then he would curse himself for his thoughtlessness and pet the drooping plant, and hill the earth up soft and high about it. "You shall have all the water from my jug," he would say in his remorse. "It will serve me right to go thirsty till noon time. Then I shall not be permitted to forget you." When all was done, and after much fond lingering, the boy would return to his twelve rows and begin vigorously on the first.

He was a skillful, active worker, sure of his stroke and swift in recovery for the next. The

hoe seemed always to obey and love him. The boy would play that the potato vines were a friendly colony of people that were being invaded by a great and wicked army, the weeds, and that he was the good giant who alone could save his people. He would talk to them all as he fought, and send out words of encouragement to the waiting rows beyond him. Sometimes he would step over to strike down a taller hated weed, then back again to his steady, allotted labor. Work, work—two rows were finished in no time, and his arms were eager for work, and his eyes flashing with intent.

The green sod at the edge of the field was delicately cool and inviting. The boy longed for a drink, but the water had been given all to the broken potato plant. He stooped to look at it. Alas it was withering with the heat. "Let it be shaded," said the boy, and he ran for a burdock leaf, since burdocks were of the enemy, and plucking them would be a virtue. It was hard to find a large one, and then it took long patience to prop it up with clods. Then, somehow,—just how he could never remember—the boy was lying on the cool, inviting turf—had been lying so for some time, it seemed, for he knew all the shapes of the clouds and what they

had all changed from. There was a dragon and a mermaid and a kitten: there was a witch, too, which had been a woman with a harp, and before that a ship bending downward with the wind; and now the twelve rows and the enemy, and the suffering people! The boy was at work again chiding himself for his idleness. He worked steadily, now, in the scorch of the sun, the perspiration making him faint in his eyesight; work, work, work! alas the dinner bell was ringing and he had done only four rows! "I will not take a rest at noontime," he was saying. "I will hasten back to do my eight before sunset;" but in the afternoon, as in the morning, things came up and grew in his life and his back ached with bending, and the shade called over from the trees in the pasture to come to it, and, "eight rows!" was all the boy could say as he walked home, disheartened, in the twilight.

"I shall never be strong, try as I will," he was saying.

But the boy's father in the little grocery store at the village that night would speak of the excessive heat of the day and tell how his boy did not mind it.

"He has done eight rows of potatoes this very day," he was saying, "done them well, too; and you know how long the rows in my field are!"

III

I THINK this boy was never ambitious; at least as most boys or men are ambitious. Things seemed to flow in upon him in his dreams—great things such as love, admiration, power, fame; he was always accustomed to possessing these and they seemed to belong to him as his birthright. He accepted them; but as for desiring them, there was nothing left to desire.

One of his most familiar day-dreams as a boy was that he was king of his great nation—the boy king. He had a kind heart and strong love of truth and equity. So it was that the pictures of himself as king were those of the righter of wrongs and the helper of the weak. His instincts, too, were all against conventions. "They say" and "They do" were always his greatest enemies. "Do not listen to what the people say, nor yet the leaders, either," says the young king. "Listen only to the voice of God as it flows in upon you from around. You complain, it will not flow? Or you fear for its authority? That is because you yourself have

not the desire to do the right. You prefer rather to listen to your own vain chatterings."

And it seemed the truth did always come to him. Never for a moment did his soul know of doubt or hesitation. His acts failed often. He knew that he had been selfish or unkind; that he had not done the eternal justice in all, but he always knew the voice of God was there, and then knowing how miserably he had failed, in the agony of his remorse he would walk out to the stars at night and throwing aside his hat he would lift his tear-stained face, and stretch his yearning arms to the cool, moist calm that so loved him, while his voice was pleading up into the night, repeating and going from him till he sank with fatigue.

"Oh, God let me be good! Only good! Take all else from me and away, if You like. Make me good, sweet God, nor let me think of other things than that."

He was a joyous boy always with his mates, a leader often in their fun; and with his brothers and sisters, and even with his father, too, he was looked upon much as the spirit of merriment. And yet it was, while no one ever knew, that often in the summer nights, when the rain was falling gently from the hovering

sky, that the world melancholy rose up within this boy as he listened to the patter of the drops, till, unable to bear longer the stifling weight within the house, he crept out into the falling rain and took the rich incensed emptiness in his arms, much as the lover clasps his beloved to his breast; and the soft rain, soothing on his upturned face, carried his tears with its own; and the rich, smoke-scented air settled upon his straining lips, till, flushed with content at last, he could return to his bed again and sob himself, childlike, to sleep.

Living as he did with such strange friends as these, it was little wonder that his fellows sometimes thought him to betray hints of a high ambition; but it was not ambition, but recognition and acceptance, instead. For instance, he sometimes spoke, as a boy, of going to the greatest university in the land, and when he had finished there, of writing books and working for all people. While those who heard him secretly wondered at his daring, they only laughed, so that he soon learned silence. He had no money and only the rich could do the things he talked of: this was his answer; so that, seeing how short their sight was, he held his peace and quietly set to work.

It took three years to make the very faintest beginning. His father died, of loneliness, may be, and the family scattered to the four points. The boy traveled to the far West with a neighbor and became the general chore-doer on a little ranch on the prairies. His wage was three dollars for a month, but after he had worked two years and come to be more capable and strong, the sum was raised to four.

The boy knew that the only problem, however, was to save, and in time even four dollars a month would be enough. Then he would spend a winter in the town academy. It is not difficult, on the whole, to save money on a ranch or farm. Blue duck is very cheap for trousers and jacket, and the boy went without new hats and shoes. Once his feet were bare so late into the winter that he was confined to the house for two months with frozen toes. Then he saw that he must buy coarse shoes, but he learned to make his own stockings and economized there, at least.

Then, some day he would read a notice in the county paper of some wonderful toy that he longed for, and thereupon he would draw the money and buy it, never thinking at the time how his small amount was lessened. Once it

was a magic lantern with wonderful pictures; once it was a toy engine; sometimes it was books; I think he never regretted a Shakespeare so long as he lived, but the rest were lamented sadly when in time they had wearied his fancy.

He used to wish often to read, but there was nothing aside from old school books, so he set him new tasks in them. They were hard to do. The boy tried them, off and on, during the entire three years, but he never made them come to anything he wished. After all his only hope was to save. Then he thought of the extravagance of the magic lantern and the engine, and he walked out on the level in the night and cursed him for a fool and a weakling.

In three years, however, there was enough for a shabby wardrobe and the academy tuition and board. He attended for five months. It seemed the only five months in the three years of his life, then his money was all spent.

"How faithfully he has worked and saved," said all the neighbors to their own boys who had spent their wages as they went.

The boy saw that he could have gone another month if he had not spent for the engine and the lantern. It was a bitter, bitter day for him when he packed his shabby wardrobe to go home.

IV

AT all events he had made advance in his earning capacity. He had learned enough to enable him to teach in the country schools. The examination was passed with high honor, for he had worked night and day in the academy, and his was the age to learn. Sixteen years old, he was able to begin his teaching and he earned twenty dollars a month, though the terms were but four months or five in the year.

There was a little white school house snuggled close up under a hill, while below and around it crept a creek with its wooded, lowland that looked off toward the river. Inside the house were the rows of ugly desks, the rusty box stove, and the teacher's table. A sense of tedium and dust was in the air. Around the wall the chalk-gray blackboard was regularly interrupted by tall, staring windows. Many a war goes on within these dusty boxes that history of crusades can hardly more than equal for moral strength and courage, for patience and finesse that is the boasted monopoly of great world generalship.

The boy now was weak and slender for his years. He was not beautiful longer, neither was he prepossessing in his manner—an undeveloped face, a too-receding chin. "Why there are ten boys in the school who have more beard than he!" said the disgusted committee when they saw the teacher they had engaged through their superintendent's recommendation.

Nevertheless the boy teacher rang the cracked and dusty-sounding bell, and the boys with more of beard, together with a swarm of small children gathered around him. He was not large, to be sure. Six of the boys were heavier than he, and one was five years older, but they all came in time to look to him as their master. It seemed there was something in his eyes to make the looking worth the while, and when he spoke there was always close attention.

The work was long and heavy. Many of the larger boys and girls were pursuing the same branches of study that the young teacher had followed only the year before. Sometimes they over-reached him in their queries, and thorough preparation was imperative. The boy rose always before the dawn. Every sunrise found him studying in the dusty room, and twilight could not linger in the evening to see

him close the leaves. Still, there was much undone. He could not work during the intermission: it was not well that pupils should see him doing that; moreover, he loved the outdoor games and was leader in the sports of the young men. In the evenings after the late supper he could hardly work at ease, for the family with whom he lived were sitting together around the fire, and there was no warm room in the house where he could go away to study.

"When Saturdays and Sundays come," said the boy, "there will be time for me to do all I need."

And so there would have been, but how were these work-times spent?

Saturday morning it seemed there was always commotion of the sweeping and dusting in the little house of the big family, and the boy found good excuse to himself for taking a morning walk.

Trees had been always dear to him, and during his three years on the uplands of the ranch he had been quite deprived of their affection. It was very sweet to wander with them here and hold old converse with them now again. He soon chose one out for his dearest friend and comrade, and many hours they spent in

confidential company. The tree was oak, and it grew solitary among the elms and ash trees that could not know its yearnings. Its home was snug and pleasant; there was a tiny ravine high with clay cliffs on either side, and half way up the sturdy oak was set. The boy could step from the bank above directly off into the spreading branches of his friend, and sitting there in these wild arms of nature could watch the trickling brook below, or stay motionless for the timid, curious squirrels to peep and chatter, or watch the flying clouds and swaying, thick-twigged branches overhead.

Sometimes the snow and ice lay deep in the little ravine below, and quails crept purringly in and out among the bushes. But the tree always held out its warm and comforting arms so that the boy, wrapped in his shabby coat, could sit for hours in the sheltered spot without feeling the chill of the winter.

He used to cry sometimes. I really can see no reason; but often as he sat there with his friend he used to throw his arms around the sturdy trunk, and laying his cheek close up against the bark would give himself to the relief of violent weeping. The oak tree knew and sympathised. Often it swayed him to and fro

to hush him, and sometimes soft, low moans came from its wreathing branches as the two swung clasped together in the thin chill wind from the prairies.

Once when the boy went home to the midday dinner he saw on looking in the glass the imprint of the oak tree's bark still red upon his face. He kept that side averted as much as he could from the sight of the crowded, practical family for fear they might question him, and he was very much ashamed.

He knew, too, that half the day was gone, and still he had done no work on the troublesome arithmetic and algebra. After the dinner was over he would go to the sitting room and take out his books to work. He was always drowsy then. Was it the hearty dinner, perhaps? Or was it the morning in the wind? A romance lay on the table. The boy had read so little romance. There was an organ, too, with mysterious possibilities, though no one could teach him even the rudiments of music. Then the children came with their games. "It is the teacher's duty," he said, "always to be kind to children." Perhaps the busy mother found a little time to "entertain the teacher." In all, the day was gone and the algebra and arithme-

tic problems were not familiar. So Sunday followed on Saturday. Generally the crowded family had visitors with everywhere noise and confusion, and again the week began with the growing dawn on the school house, and again the boy was calling the curses on his head for a weakling and an idler who did ever nothing but mope when his duty was pressing heavily.

Week followed week, till the spring came to the oak tree friend in the ravine, but then the boy was gone.

"He was a good teacher," said the committee. "And he did a marvellous amount of work."

The boy knew it was all lies. And in his coward heart he cursed him for a failure, nor ever could he think upon that winter but the shame burned in his face.

V

THE first two years in college perhaps, the boy felt less of the strain and draw within him than at any other time of his life.

It is a fearsome thing for a shy youth to enter college, especially so if his nearest companions from childhood have been the plains and sheep, with only the sky for recognition. The boy, too, had many things to hold him in submission. As he entered the roomy halls, well filled with well-dressed students who seemed so very much at ease, it was little wonder that he slipped behind the doors or into remotest corners and never offered a word without compulsion, and then only with the most violent trembling.

He knew that he was shabbily dressed. He had taken his suit in the little country town because it was the first the salesman had given him and he had not dared to say to him he did not want it. Of course the coat was too big, and the trousers also, except in the length of leg. But he had told himself in comfort that he could set the buttons over on the coat,

and as for the short-legged trousers, he could let them down on the suspenders. They would hang in folds upon him; he knew how ugly they were; but perhaps the coat would cover the worst. At all events, he liked the color, and the salesman did not offer to show him others.

Besides the feeling of his ugly clothing, there was the knowledge of his room, and it seemed that every student in college must know just how he lived.

The little basement room, the cheapest he could find, where he ate and slept and cooked and did his washing. He tried to be very careful about the niceness of his person, but once in class he thought he caught the smell of fried fat in his coat and it seemed he would go wild before the hour was over and he could get out into the air. His underclothes, his stockings and flannel shirts he washed on Sunday mornings. It was the only time; for Saturdays and all his afternoons as well he spent at outside work in order to earn his living. There were odd jobs only. He did not enjoy the dignity of regular work—sometimes some wood to saw, sometimes a house to scrub, or the painting of a barn, or the cleaning of a yard or stable.

The well-dressed students often saw him do-

ing this work, and if they smiled to him as they often did, the smile was barely recognised, for though the boy knew of their well meaning, his heart was very bitter.

However, his fear kept him at work. Far into the night he worked by the light of his little kerosene lamp. Five hours and sometimes eight he spent over a single page of Latin, nervous, frightened, half crying. Often the clock struck two before he closed the book and gave himself up to dreams where the verbs drove him wild with torment. Yes, that was a strong two years, or so he often said afterwards, but at the time, I think his curses at himself rained thick as ever. Still, he was often almost leading in his class, though he was never quite leading, either. He usually stood third or fourth. He was not extraordinarily bright, he knew that; and so he recognised that because he was not the first was not for lack of effort.

Near the end of the second year there came a change. A friend came into his life. Before this time he had always been alone when among men. To be sure there had been friends, other boys, students, too, some of them with whom he had talked and reasoned. But while these had made him company they had not been soul-

touching with himself, as had been the oak tree or the plains or the sky that overspread them. This friend could both think and feel, and though he had much else in his life, he gave himself up for a month much to his new found friendship.

The boy gave all: himself, books, lessons—how could he think of them? Was there not the last word of his comrade? There was, as well, so much besides the word. The look, the tone, even the place was remembered. When midnight came to him now the boy closed up his useless books and crept out in the darkness towards the house where his friend lay sleeping. He never told him of those nightly journeys. That was impossible to tell. The house was become sacred to him, even the very direction in which it lay gave him a different feeling from the other points of the compass, he hid himself in the darkness of the tree across the street and said his prayers before it.

You will laugh at this, perhaps. It seems a foolish thing. Maybe you will discuss it and say it was abnormal. At all events it wrenched the boy to the very finest atom of his soul. He was never the same again. He was another, you may speculate whether stronger or weaker.

All day, all night, his thought was with his friend. Well for his grades in class that the year's work was almost over! Methodically he drudged on through the form of study, and his examinations were the pride of his instructors. Still his heart was never in his work.

The two separated in a month. They never met again, and the boy returning to his prairies once more thought often that his time was past for work; but if he began to curse himself for his weakness as once had been his custom, the thought of his comrade friend seemed the curse that he was cursing, and then he prayed instead with holy and fervent thanksgiving.

VI

THE boy's great love for his friend was soon to become the motive for his action, instead of the annihilation of it. As vacation wore on he saw no chance of going back to meet him in college. He had no money at all, and must seemingly take to the dusty school teaching again. Meanwhile his comrade would go on in the beautiful work of study. Never would they be together again, for the following year his friend was going to a distant city. Perhaps he would take him another friend. All his classmates were going steadily, too. The boy saw his grasp of life was slipping, slipping; and many nights he walked the level lands for hours together, cursing and praying and sobbing to the moist stars overhead, or to the pressing mother sod, or to the diving, wind-tormented moon.

All this time there was a temptation smiling at his elbow. A friend was daily urging him to join in a plan for money-making—to take an agency for a book, the pay was sure for at least ten dollars a week. It meant his comrade again

in the fall, it meant a year of the college growth and life, and opposed to it was only a month of distasteful work, but besides the distastefulness there was a hint of dishonour as well. The boy thought long and reasoned with himself.

There was need of reason here. The old voice flowing in was strong to say that it was not honourable. "That is mere prejudice," said the reason, and so it set to work to put the old voice down.

"Why do you object?" it said. "Because you are a coward. It is the old fear and dread. You are afraid to take a sneer from a peasant. Look at the good you will do in selling a book. Do not farmers need it? Certainly they will be much the better off. They have no books at home. They will never buy unless they are forced to do so. This is true missionary work. Suppose you do charge double price for the book; suppose you do get full half the profits—is not the task a thankless one? Do you not work and worry? Do you not have to smile at snubs and jeers? Besides all this, is there not risk, a factor that always allows broad margin in the most reputable of business?"

In time the reason won. No, it was not the

reason after all. It was the vision of his comrade's face smiling through his tears.

The boy secured his material, prepared himself upon it and went away to work.

It was disagreeable, more disagreeable and thankless, even, than he had anticipated. He had chosen a territory some twenty miles from home. It had seemed wisest to do that, and so he trudged and talked and was ashamed, but tried to keep his courage up by the money that he saw coming richly in.

It was curious, the feeling that he had of guilt and timidity as he walked up to the little box-like houses perched on the prairie, to be met with fierce rebuff, as if he were an enemy to civilization, instead of a benefactor. He soon began to wonder if, after all, missionaries could ever justify their existence. The first day there were no sales, and all next morning he made no impression, but seemed a hungry cur to be kicked from house to house. It was at noon that he met success and a greeting.

There were two old people living in a pretty house, and they seemed glad to welcome a wandering stranger. They took him in, gave him their hospitable fare, and praised his book and his ambitions in every way they could. Since

then the boy has prayed for blessings on them many times, but they will never know it. They told him of several others who would buy his book as well.

"No, it was an honourable business," they said. People did not look aright upon the mission of the book agent." He must keep on, and they would help him all they could. They were sure that they could help him to many dollars.

When the boy went away he was strong and eager. He would not go to the families they had named. He would let them talk of him first and grow to watch for his coming. He turned farther to the north where the land lay toward the stream and the wheat did not grow so thickly.

One family was bitter poor. A woman with two children, and they had been deserted. He was pleased that the next house was neat and cared for. In spite of its smallness it seemed to him very promising. The woman gave him from the first a very interested welcome. She was young, but worn with care. Then there was a look in her eyes that went beyond care. How much of the world yearns for growth and instruction. The woman looked with eager, hungry eyes that cut the boy to the heart. He

reflected that this was the best method of getting subscriptions, according to the instructions of his firm, and kept steadily on.

"Interest the women," said the circular, "and they will persuade their husbands into buying the book if you call again in the morning." The boy knew what jars at home this process of persuading must involve. The man would argue and object. His mind was on the honest debts that already they could not pay. The woman would insist and tease, the husband finally go away with an "all right" that would be a club to beat her with for many months.

To-day, however, the case seemed so promising that the boy thought to pursue it to the end. He would go out and call on the man and settle the bargain in the field.

He found the man gloomy and brooding. Not yet a year-old husband, he was in straits to meet his debts. His wife was fond of nice things, and here the wheat and rye were drying up under his very eyes. What right had a man to live at all? he asked; or was it that the question was asked him and he did not know an answer. He listened silently to the agent's glowing description of the book. It meant a step beyond where he had ever been, and in-

voluntarily he was drawn to the boy and the vague thing that he talked of. "Your wife too, likes the book and wishes much to have it," said the enterprising agent, at a most judicious moment. A look of helpless pain flitted across the face of the year-old husband. Then he broke out in a torrent of denunciation.

Look at his wheat and now his withering corn! There was no moisture in the heavens for him, and this was all his chance. His life was now close hampered. Debts, debts, and a spending wife! Soon, too, there would be a child. What hope for a young man was there? What right had a man to live? He did not blame an agent for doing the best he could at his business: every man must work for himself. But let there be no agent's parley here. He knew it was the only chance to get out of this life, his reading and learning and improving; but why should an agent come to him and tell him so, when he knew the way was barred? Books? Knowledge? He could not find him bread. His wife and baby, what could become of them? What right had a man to live?

The boy threw his books from sight and he took the young man's hands.

"Forget the books," he said, and the tears

were in his voice. "Forget the books and the learning. They are an abomination and a curse. Go home to your wife and her love. To you both it is all sufficient. Blame me alone for what I have put between you. The rain will yet come on your wheat, and the baby will still learn to bless you."

It was a strange thing for a book agent to do; but when he went away it seemed he was an agent no longer.

Far off from all houses he wandered to a quiet hollow in the prairies and sat him down to think. There were all the rebuffs and experiences of the past two days and they furnished matter for reflection. The twilight was coming on. He had no place as yet for lodging. He remembered how he had heard of one man not far off who had said he would shoot any agent who entered his gate. Why was an agent so despised and lonely? Why did he interfere with everybody's content and comfort? "What right," came the echo to him, "what right has a man to live?"

As the misty twilight gathered, he looked again for the vision of his friend and comrade's face to smile upon him. It was no longer there, but another face smiled out instead. It was his

mother's smiling to him kindly. He did not remember his mother's face, and could not then have seen it in his fancy had it not been for a picture in his old home. He remembered the even parting and flowing of the hair, but most of all to-night was the shining of the eyes.

The boy leaped up and turned his face homeward. Twenty miles in the night. It seemed as nothing to him. Why, he would sing it as he went!

"I have said I would be strong," he chanted, "strong, strong! I will be strong! But I will be honest and honourable as well."

That night the joy was upon him. But in the days, weeks, months, that followed he often questioned to himself whether the honourableness of his song were not only an excuse for his cowardice. In years, he came to know it was.

VII

IT is probable that no course is difficult to pursue if one only wishes to pursue it and is willing to take all accidents philosophically on the way. At all events the boy found it most natural that he should complete his college work in time and then cross half a continent to finish in a great university. For him it was the easiest possible thing to do. In fact he could not have done otherwise. So it was with his writing of books. Having announced his intentions early in life to take that as a profession he had calmly marched on that course, burning all bridges behind him till now there was nothing other left to do. He must finish at the University. He must go for a year to foreign lands and then he must perforce write books. As for the cost and manner of living, there was no need of question.

"I have lived now for twenty-five years," said the boy, "and have always done it honestly. It would be absurd, freakish and impossible if my twenty-sixth year should fail me."

Perhaps there is less trouble in paying one's way in a large university than there is in a small school or college. Surely the boy lived in some way. It is his study now that will most concern us.

The boy knew that he had long since ceased to be a student. He had won always the highest rank in classes, but for the last two years at least his heart had never been in his work. Perhaps it was since the time of meeting his comrade. In his early years, however, of striving, working and saving, he had unconsciously fallen into good habits of punctuality and continuance in working. A good habit is quite as hard to break as a bad habit. So it was that the boy mapped out a heavy course in his study and said it would force him to industry. The plan was only half successful.

Regular he was always from old habit; never an hour was missed, morning, afternoon, evening; grind, grind, grind; and yet he hated himself for it; he hated the machine that crowded him, and he hated the men that directed, most of all.

A university professor! To him it became the strongest phrase of contumely. That narrow, spectacled, wise old fool who sat his dry

life out in a chair and knew what other men had done, and talked of it in one hour lectures, when in reality he never knew for an instant of what he talked, because his first hypothesis, *life,* had not the slightest meaning. And how the well-dressed young enthusiastic fools sat in long rows in front and noted every precious word on their tablets. That they who were real, should think that this was reality. Blind dolts of convention, that they were! They, too, in four years' time would be broken entirely in soul, and then would end their lives mere vapid intellects and trained forms. Fit, they, as well, for only university professors.

And there he sat with the rest, a fellow-victim to their words and conventions. He, too, was a slave to form, but not yet so much as they, for never would he use their tablets, never would he read their dry and chaff-filled books. No; he was bound like the rest, but he at least had curses for the enslavers. He crumpled the paper in his hands, and either followed their curious intellectual meanderings with the interest of some entomologist in watching the habits of an insect, or else his sympathy for them griped, and he cursed and cried at them all in his passion. Often it was, that leaving after an hour

in the lecture room he found that he could scarcely walk for dizziness, and then he knew how great had been his effort.

Being now enough enslaved to be of an analytical mind, he saw then that there was the tragedy of his paradox; he was weak only in being strong, strong only in being weak. It seemed to him that his life had worked itself out on itself and that he would never care for anything more.

This was but in reaction from the frenzy. As soon as he had recovered he would reason that he must give himself all to one side and in that he would find himself again.

Suppose he become a student for two years at least and give himself to the method: then he would get him tablets and sit to his books most determinedly. As he read, or often before he read, there floated coloured visions across the gray of the page—faces that he had been drawn towards; one face that had always been his torment, his delight—that of his comrade friend who had not known him: then trifles of the house or street, a child crying in the wind, the poor, hovelling in the filthy city, the fresh air blowing on the hill-tops. The determination method was all to no purpose. Lunch time came, then

dinner, then bed; and never once had the gray of the page coloured with its own meaning, or at best only for a moment for him; and he saw with a flash that it was worthless.

Perhaps he would try the natural within him: a day far out in the hills, the clean wind whispering in spring orchards, the rounded slopes of turf to lie on, with the sun and the sky for company, and the farmers working far below in their checkered market gardens.

"I give myself up to dreams and reality," said the boy, kissing the fond earth softly. Then, as he waited for the voices to flow in and fill him, there came instead the details of his work; the number of days more to be spent on a thesis; the number on the year's examination; he had now but three dollars in the world. Could he get the copying he had expected? His geometry lesson must be learned to-night in order that he could tutor it in the morning. How shabby his hat was becoming, and now there were holes in his shoes. No, the hill tops refused consolation. Leaping up angrily the boy would hasten back, for it was only in flashes that he could catch the words of the sunlight. All the way he was cursing himself for a drivelling, weakly fool, who did not see well

what he wanted and seeing what he did had not the power to retain it.

"He has had such a restful day," said his friends as they saw him coming. "Really he is working too hard. And only think of what he accomplishes! To carry so many courses of study, to work his way by teaching and jobbing and errands, and then to write stories at night: it is really quite marvelous how much one man can accomplish."

VIII

IT has occurred to me that perhaps we may call the boy a man after these two years. It is difficult to tell where the line should be drawn in the development of character. Perhaps it is never truly drawn in life, but all male human kind do die as truly boys as when they meet their first love. On the whole, since we have got used to the subject of our history as a boy, we may as well continue on with him as such.

He was not yet strong or handsome. People in general usually marked him as being curious and awkward, and yet there was something in his face that made some older women, especially women who had seen deeply of the world, to long to take him in their mother arms and comfort him. They never dared do this. A deep-set, clear reserve shone calmly out from behind his sparkling, confidential eyes that made him live alone. The yearning mother arms were always forced to drop in abject helplessness, until they learned to forget their instinct of lovingness. Forgetting is not a difficult process for the human heart, especially

when it has the luck to pass through the gate of substitution. So it was that the man-boy came to be left alone, perhaps even more than he sometimes wished. And yet, he was never silent, morose, or gloomy. Men always thought he talked by far too much, and often fought against his confidences. They were the fools in thinking what he gave were confidences. For them they would have been, but this man's nature flowed deeper.

The time had come when he should go to foreign lands. He had no money or means of any kind, but that, he said simply, was no matter, he would go and work his way. That would be life indeed, after the stupidity of set tasks in college. He knew now well enough of the sloth and doubting of his disposition.

"If I throw myself penniless upon a strange society that speaks an unknown tongue," said the boy, "perhaps it will arouse me to action."

"What boldness and courage he has," said all who knew him. It was not that at all, it was fear and weakness that drove him to the point, the boy knew very well.

Nor was it foolhardiness or adventure that sent him, but plain necessity. The boy must see some of the great art. That was his need,

imperative as breath. He had no means; he could not wait to earn: his life demanded *go*. He worked three months for wage, then took passage across the sea with a gang of lowest workmen on a cattle boat and trusted that he find more work before his wage was spent. When he should sicken most of the filthy life, of his mates, the workmen, he had told himself at starting that he might then be led to help them. He knew that none of his sympathies could be aroused unless he were compelled to share their bitterness, and who ought more to share the bitterness and make it sweet than he? For were not these of the gang his brothers? Was not he a child of the people?

In this attempt he failed. The stench, both moral and material, of these men sickened him and made him hate them with the fiendishness of hell eternal. For full three weeks his fever was at such heat that could he have annihilated the souls of these men he would have done it calmly: and yet he always smiled and seemed most kind among them. Often he did a shirker's work and doubled up his own without a murmur. "He is the gentlest and kindest of the crew," they all said, when they meant he was the most beloved. "He is good, too, and

strong," said some and they went to him for counsel.

The voyage ended in time, and the boy, limp and weak unto death, rested in the crowded, poverty-soaked part of a great city. All the long days he wandered in galleries and churches, feeding his sense with art. Some times, a day, he walked out upon the barren plain around the city and dreamed of boyhood again.

Aimlessly, too, he began seeking work in his fumbling language, for now within a month starvation would look him in the face. Let him think of the excitement of it as he would, it seemed a humdrum monotony of existence, in spite of its nervousness and strain. His life was chiefly with the pictures. They drew him and stirred him like the old love for his comrade friend. He wondered if that love was old sometimes, as he looked into their depths or walked upon the barren plain. The gray eyes smiling steadily were on him once again. He wondered almost if he might not be dying.

Two weeks of the month had passed and the boy still sat before the pictures, trying stupidly to reason himself into action. One day there happened to stop there a kindly man of middle

age who wished to know of a picture and spoke to the boy in his own native tongue. The old sounds warmed the boy to eloquence, and he spoke out feelingful about the picture. This was the beginning of their friendship, which lasted but three days, since the kindly man's hour was set for sailing. Before they parted the kindly man knew all the story. There were few words till the last, and then taking the boy's limp hands in both his own he talked to him earnestly of duty. The boy must go on studying his art, the kindly man said. He owed it to himself and to society. He might live, if he chose, with the people; he might spend as little as he liked; but that little he must not, could not, earn. He had not the time or power. He must, in short, accept help from him.

Then the man spoke quietly of himself. He had no one to call on him for money; he never had had many. His life was easy to him through his luck and not through any effort of his own. Steadily he pleaded with the boy that he should take his help and finish his year of pictures. Then he might go home again and live as he chose with his people.

When the time for sailing came he left the boy staring dumbly with the crispness of new

paper in his hand and the bitterness that he had failed again in his heart, and the thought that even his friends would not speak of him as successful.

The boy did not go to the pictures that afternoon. He walked out far to the barren plains that were his home, and when the lonely silence was his horizon he lay his man's full length face downward on the ground and it seemed that the earth sobbed with him.

IX

FULL-VIGORED the man came back and gave himself to his life work. The field was wide around him. Choosing a center city he placed himself in the thick of its problems and said he would work among them. Shall we write of a final failure?

He saw the needs, he often saw the remedies as well; he gave much of his time to advance them, but his heart was otherwhere. It seemed to him he longer had no heart. His life was burned quite out.

If he went to a great meeting where the mass needed enthusiasm and exhortation, it was not in him to participate in either. Listening for the most vital points, his thoughts were often wandering. Perhaps it was a woman's care-stained face in the crowd, perhaps the vulgarities of a speaker. Aimless he wandered up and down the streets and saw no place to put his hands to work.

Sometimes the old fire burned up for a time, and it seemed there was hope forthcoming. If he was walking the murky streets at night,

yearning for the purity of the moonlight of the plains, sometimes, it was, the thick throbbing life of the city entered in upon him and lived itself in his soul. The noisy streets filled with the passion of selfishness, envy, and gain; the love and light as well, were not forgotten by him; but most of all the warped humanity appealed, and he saw great growth for society, and revelled in thoughts of shaping it. Like giants he suffered, and bright were his plans for the morning.

But when the morning came the thick dust blew in the hopeless streets, and all his life was wearied from him. His last night's struggle? It was all of dream stuff now. It hardly interested him.

Perhaps he saw others, quiet and ordinary people, even, who were giving their strongest patient work to his cause, not so much as conscious of their motive. He thanked God for these, and he followed humbly in their footsteps, at least he followed when he was not tired. Often he seemed too languid to follow, and then he pretended watching them in the distance. After quite losing sight for a time he would again meet with these people and come to talking with them.

"How wise and sweet and strong he is," they would say when he was gone. "He has helped us over the hardest place, and has made all life seem nobler. And think what he does as well! There is a second man's work accomplished after the writing of his books. The whole, wide city has come to know and love him."

But the man, worn and weary with his idleness, was thinking drowsily in his dejection:

"I have come to more hope than all in the vigor of my youth. I now see clearly and thankfully that others will carry work through: and that I, the least of them all, will follow and fall while they conquer."

You may think this is a strange unsatisfactory ending to our history; but remember that it is not an ending, at least not more than was written in the beginning. Each chapter in this short account has ended in itself. It is monotonous, is it not, that all have been the same?

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